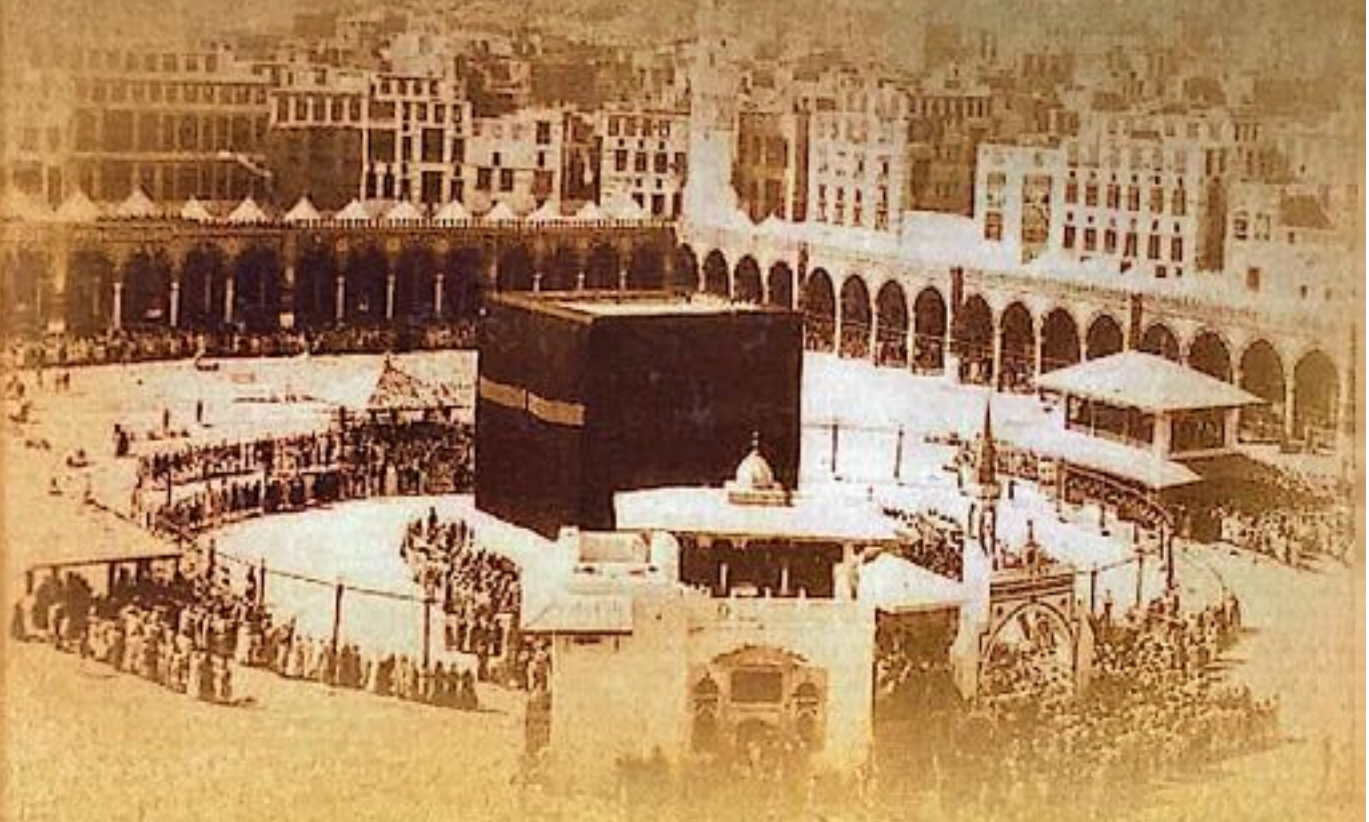
CULTISM

AND THE IMAMS OF THE SALAFI MOVEMENT



AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF

Mawqif A'imma al-Ḥaraka al-Salafiyya min al-Taṣawwuf wa'l-Ṣūfiyya

BY SHAYKH ʿABDUL ḤAFĪẒ AL-MAKKI
TRANSLATED BY ISMAEEL NAKHUDA

Sufism and the Imams of the Salafi Movement

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An English Translation of:

Mawqif A'imma al-Ḥaraka al-Salafiyya min al-Taṣawwuf wa'l-Ṣūfiyya

By Shaykh ʿAbdul Ḥafīẓ al-Makki

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For

Shaykh ʿAbdul Ḥafīẓ al-Makki

& Haji Mohammed Nakhuda

—two rocks in my life who left in quick succession.

May they both be enveloped in the

Almighty's divine mercy.

Āmīn.

Transliteration and Honorific Guide

The transliteration used in our books is to facilitate the pronunciation of Arabic words using Roman script for the ease and convenience of our readers. However, this is not meant to be a substitute for learning to properly read and pronounce Arabic script. Every Muslim should take it upon themselves to learn the rules of *tajwid* (proper Qur'ânic recitation) from a qualified teacher.

ا،ء	a,'	ع	‘
ب	b	غ	gh
ت	t	ف	f
ث	th	ق	q
ج	j	ك	k
ح	ḥ	ل	l
خ	kh	م	m
د	d	ن	n
ذ	dh	و	w
ر	r	ه	h
ز	z	ي	y
س	s	ـَ	a
ش	sh	ـِ	i
ص	ṣ	ـُ	u
ض	ḍ	آ،ـا	ā
ط	ṭ	ـِي	ī
ظ	ẓ	ـُو	ū

ﷺ "Glorified and Exalted

ﷺ "Peace and blessing of Allah be upon him"

ﷺ,ﷺ "Peace be upon him/them"

ﷺ,ﷺ "Allah be pleased with him/her"

ﷺ,ﷺ "Allah be pleased with them"

ﷺ "Allah have mercy upon him"

According to the convention used in our books:

-The Majestic Name, "Allah," does not take a diacritic.

-The *tā marbūṭah* (ة) that occurs at the end of some Arabic words is generally transliterated into English with an "h" at the end of the word, except when it comes in the names of people in which case it is dropped off.

-Arabic words transliterated into English are italicized except words that have been adopted into the English dictionary, commonly used words, and proper nouns.

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Publisher's Note

In defending the truth against reprehensible innovation, it is possible for one to transgress the bounds and ultimately negate something that has a shar'ī basis. This can result in attacking or even denying an established practice in the religion, or in the vilification of righteous believers. This is a very grave matter. 'Allāma Ibn Taymiyyah ﷺ writes in *Iqtiḍā' al-Ṣirāt al-Mustaqīm*:

> "...And you will find many of those who prohibit others from engaging in reprehensible innovations in worship and mundane affairs to be deficient in implementing the proper sunnah therein. Nor [will you find them] commanding the right approach regarding those practices. Rather, you may even find many of them in a worse spiritual state than those involved in reprehensible innovations in worship.

Furthermore, the act of enjoining the good and forbidding evil go together hand in hand. One cannot exist without the other. Hence, you will not find anyone who forbids the evil except that he should also be enjoining the good at the same time. Like the person who commands the worship of Allah—he also prohibits ascribing partners in worshipping other than him, at one and the same time.

[And it is also essential to know] that [the nature of the nafs is such] that it is inclined to action, not to inaction. Therefore, the reason behind prohibiting certain [good actions] is only due to something [disliked which is found therein] other than [the action] itself, for if [the nafs] is not involved in righteous deeds, it will be involved in some other action which is sinful or deficient...".

From this pertinent excerpt, we understand that if we prohibit an action due to a particular evil or reprehensible element therein, we must also enjoin a good action which is established from the Sunnah in place of it. Regarding Taṣawwuf, many who prohibit and condemn its reprehensible aspects fail to convey the good of it—which is actually required by the *sharī'ah*—such as *dhikr* of Allah, *tahajjud*, visiting the pious, and purifying one's heart from jealousy, lust, hatred and other internal maladies. They think their prohibiting the reprehensible aspects of Taṣawwuf absolves them of that Taṣawwuf which is established from the Sunnah. In the process, they themselves abandon the good of it and become deprived of correct spirituality, while depriving others due to prohibiting something that is good and

necessary. Thus, they lead themselves and others into a state of spiritual deprivation, as ʿAllāma Ibn Taymiyya ﷺ himself points out.

This misguided manner of correcting certain reprehensible aspects that had crept into Taṣawwuf results in a culture of criticism founded on unjust presumptions and misinformed allegations, leading the people who follow such a culture to engage in witch-hunting, marginalization and ultimately *takfīr*[1] and *tafsīq*[2] of pious Muslims or even scholars.

The Prophet ﷺ has informed us of the detrimental effects of this unjust and rash passing of judgment upon others:

> *"He who harbors enmity for a pious slave of Mine,*
> *I wage war against him..."*[3]

If we are quick to vilify pious Muslims who may be doing something we have misunderstood due to our own lack of knowledge or having been misinformed then we may unknowingly fall into hatred and enmity of a friend of Allah. This can be extremely detrimental to us in this life and in the hereafter.

Similarly, in declaring someone an unbeliever, for the same reasons (i.e. lack of proper proof, misinformation or hearsay) we fall into *takfīr* of someone who may well be a sincere believer.

And the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has said:

> *"He who says to his brother, 'O disbeliever',*
> *and he is not so, it will return back to one of them."*[4]

1— To accuse someone of kufr.
2— To accuse someone of a major sin.
3— Bukhārī
4— Bukhārī & Muslim

Returning to the issue of vehemently defending the truth and losing one's *inṣāf* (fairness) in the process, a glaring example of this in our times is the Salafiyyah's insistence upon the complete baselessness of Taṣawwuf, amounting to its blatant denial.

Such an intense culture of opposition to Taṣawwuf (Sufism) was created in Salafi circles (which extended into their general propagation of Salafism) that along with Taṣawwuf, all spirituality itself became associated with deviance, misguidance, sinfulness and even disbelief and heresy.

In the process, righteous Muslims, pious scholars and literally the majority of practicing Muslims around the world were vilified and branded as deviants and misguided sinners.

The word Sufi, in their terminology, became equivalent to "deviant."

The obvious *fitnas* and tensions this created in the Ummah were immense. One of these *fitnas* was the division of the Ummah that occurred from the dissension sewed in communities and masjids across the globe. Another more dangerous result was that it led to a denial of a fundamental aspect—an integral—of the religion: *iḥsān*, or, *tazkiyah* (the pursuit of spiritual excellence or the purification of the heart, respectively).

For its adherents, it reduced the religion to external practices and outward ritual deeds that lacked internal substance. It disconnected them from centuries of saintly scholars and reduced their "*salaf*" to a handful of people whom they certified as rightly guided—and who had happened to slip through their anti-Sufi radar.

The purpose of this book is to demonstrate how these handful of rightly guided scholars, as accepted by the Salafiyyah,

were not only proponents of Taṣawwuf, but actual practitioners of Taṣawwuf themselves.

Shaykh ʿAbdul Ḥafīẓ al-Makki ﷺ simply cites excerpts from the works of these scholars and presents them for the benefit of the reader, so he may see for himself.

The objective of this book is not to further any tensions or ill-feelings in the Ummah. It is simply to set the record straight and provide clarity on a misunderstood issue; an issue the denial of which is tantamount to denying an integral aspect of the religion itself.

May Allah show us the truth as it is and enable us to follow it, and may He show us falsehood as it is and enable us to avoid it. *Āmīn.*

(Mawlānā) Tameem Ahmadi
28th Muharram, 1443
September 6, 2021

Translator's Introduction

In the famous Hadith of Jibrīl ﷺ narrated by both Imām al-Bukhārī and Imām Muslim in their respective *Saḥīḥs*, the Prophet ﷺ divided Islam into three branches: *īmān*, *islām* and *iḥsān*. The first refers to one's creed and beliefs (*ʿaqidah*), the second to one's physical and material actions (*fiqh*) and the third to the conditions of the heart and inner matters, which is also known as Taṣawwuf, Ṭarīqah, Sulūk and Tazkiyah; words that are all synonymous.

The acquisition of *iḥsān* and the purification of the heart (*tazkiyah*) has been the particular focus of the Ummah since the time of the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace). For instance, writing in the 8th century AH, Ḥāfiẓ Ibn al-Qayyim in his *Madārij al-Sālikīn* (which is a commentary

of Shaykh al-Islam ʿAbdullah al-Hirawī's book on Taṣawwuf, *Manāzil al-Sā'irīn*) writes: "From the stations of *'it is You whom we worship and it is You from whom we seek aid'* (1:4) there is the station of *iḥsan*, which is the essence of *īmān*—its spirit and perfection. This station comprises all the stations; all of them are enveloped in it. Everything that has been mentioned from the beginning of this book till here is a part of *iḥsān*."

As discussed above, *iḥsān* is a synonym for Taṣawwuf and the scholars of this Ummah have always focused on these three branches of our faith. In recent decades, however, there has been an upsurge of people—especially those who attribute themselves to the Salaf and claim to revere and honor them—who erroneously deride Sufis. Some of them use the words 'Salaf' and 'Salafi' as antonyms of the word 'Sufi', as if they are two opposites that cannot meet and one is the antithesis of the other. This, however, is contrary to reality and a close reading of the hagiographies of early scholars prove this.

The book before us was written in the early 1980's by Shaykh ʿAbdul Ḥafiẓ al-Makki (1946-2017) as part of efforts to clarify this misconception. Written in Arabic under the title *Mawāqif A'immat al-Harakat al-Salafīyyah min al-Taṣawwuf w'al-Ṣūfīyyah* (*The Stance of the Imams of the Salafi Movement regarding Taṣawwuf and the Sufis*), this book is a collection of excerpts in support of Sufism and the Sufis from the writings of senior scholars of this Ummah who are looked at favorably by contemporary Salafis.

Shaykh ʿAbdul Ḥafiẓ lived and breathed Taṣawwuf and worked tirelessly to spread the correct and authentic

understanding of Taṣawwuf, the Sufis, and the following of one of the four *imāms* of *fiqh*. He incessantly wrote articles in Saudi newspapers and published books clarifying misconceptions of the *madhhabs* and Taṣawwuf. For the shaykh, as is the case for many of the leading scions of this Ummah, Sufism was an inherent part of Islam and a significant branch of the faith, something that was not alien or against the spirit of Islam but rather a subject that traditional scholars paid significant attention to throughout history. Books describing Islamic culture and history, particularly the hagiographical indexes (the *ṭabaqāt*) are full of biographies of Sufis who are mentioned with dignity and respect. Eager to draw people to this history and create greater tolerance, this book was written for the benefit of scholars and students highlighting that those senior scholars that they revere were not enemies of Taṣawwuf or the Sufis, rather they supported them, praised them and saw it honorable to be affiliated with them.

When the Arabic original of this book was published, it had a profound impact on the Arabic-speaking world, clarifying misconceptions about how the elders revered by scholars in the Middle East were connected to Sufism. As a result, some thirty years after its first edition, Shaykh ʿAbdul Ḥafiẓ published a two-volume sequel entitled *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah al-Ṣūfiyyah* (*Ranks of the Sufi Ḥanbalīs*), which contains the hagiographies of Sufi Ḥanbalī scholars from several works, including Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab's *Al-Dhayl ʿala Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah* and Qāḍī Abū'l-Ḥusayn Muḥammad ibn Abu Yaʿla's *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah*.

The sequel was written at the request of many of the shaykh's admirers and leading scholars who expressed surprise at the contents of the original book and asked if there were further biographies of leading and notable Ḥanbalī scholars who were Sufis. They also commented that many people were under the misconception that the Ḥanbalī scholars did not consider Sufism to be legitimate and that some of them considered the Sufi shaykhs as innovators and deviants. In fulfilling their request, the shaykh compiled the sequel that was then published in 2011. He also mentions in its introduction that he had felt an urge to write this book earlier, but was preoccupied with other matters, particularly, completing Shaykh Zakariyya's twenty-four volume commentary on *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* entitled, *Al-Kanz al-Mutawārī fī Maʿādin Lamiʿ al-Dirārī wa Saḥīḥ al- Bukhārī*. Interestingly, Shaykh ʿAbdul Ḥafīẓ also writes in the introduction that while writing the book he felt that, "Taṣawwuf flowed in them (the Ḥanbalī scholars) the way blood flows in the body."

Shaykh ʿAbdul Ḥafīẓ embodied the Sufism of his shaykh and *murshid*, Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Mawlānā Muḥammad Zakariyya al-Kandhlāwī (1898-1982)—a leading hadith scholar and Sufi who followed a mode of Sufism that was in sync with Sacred Islamic Law, as is typical of the scholars associated with the school of Deoband. This form of Sufism is probably best summed up in Shaykh Zakariyya's *Talāzum al-Shariʿah wa al-Ṭarīqah* (*The Interdependence of Shariʿah and Ṭarīqah*), a book that Shaykh ʿAbdul Ḥafīẓ translated

into Arabic and which has been published several times. In it, Shaykh Zakariyya comments on the Hadith of Jibril: "Taṣawwuf, in reality, is another name for *iḥsān*, that has been mentioned above. Or, it is the method by which the quality of *iḥsān* is acquired, and it is that [method] which is called Taṣawwuf or Sulūk. Call it whatever you wish, for these are just different terms and words – the purpose is one." It is this form of Sufism that Shaykh ʿAbdul Ḥafīẓ, in the footsteps of his mentor and the Sufi-scholars of Deoband, firmly adhered to throughout his life; his travels, speeches, books and articles were all geared to convey this sentiment, not just in words but also in practice.

It was during a lesson on the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Imām Muslim at Dar al-ʿUlūm Bury in around 2000, when my respected teacher, the exegete, hadith scholar and brilliant orator Shaykh Mawlānā ʿAbdur Raheem Limbada mentioned the Salafi position regarding Sufism. An eloquent and passionate speaker, Shaykh ʿAbdur Raheem extensively quoted from Shaykh ʿAbdul Ḥafīẓ's book and, merely on account of his pious thoughts regarding me, suggested I should translate it. I was in two minds at the time but ultimately came to the conclusion that it was a must. A few weeks later, I met Shaykh ʿAbdul Ḥafīẓ's son, Mawlānā ʿAbdur Rauf al-Makki who mentioned the same. Feeling that this was more than a coincidence, I felt the urge to mention this to Shaykh ʿAbdul Ḥafīẓ who, as per his habit, expressed his delight, provided heartfelt supplications and offered words of encouragement. In this way, I began my journey in translating

this book—a project that became a part of me for a number of years. Initially finding the translation cumbersome and difficult, I toiled on the book for several years while simultaneously completing my studies, first at Dar al-ʿUlūm and then when studying journalism at university. After this I married, had children, went to live in Saudi Arabia for several years, and then returned. Throughout this time, shaykh would often ask me about the translation and I recall during the earlier period mentioning that progress was slow, at which he suggested serializing the translated parts in a magazine and then publishing the entire book in hard format once complete. It was a brilliant suggestion, but there were few Islamic magazines about in those days. When Deoband.org came into existence in the 2000s, I mentioned shaykh's suggestion to the website's team who welcomed it and offered their support; something I will always be indebted to them for. May Allah reward them in the best of ways in both worlds.

The Deoband.org readership also welcomed the serializing of the book, with many readers offering words of encouragement and others expressing surprise at this hidden history, something that pushed me to continue with the translation. During this time, due to my other preoccupations, I would often leave the project for months on end, revisiting it when time permitted. The translation of the last chapter was complete but required editing and had not been published online when, in January 2017, my phone began to buzz with messages that spread rapidly across the globe that Shaykh ʿAbdul Ḥafīẓ had sadly

passed away in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. *"Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return."* (2:156)

Shaykh ʿAbdul Ḥafiẓ lived and championed the cause of Taṣawwuf in the footsteps of his own shaykh, whose final mission was to revitalize the work of *sulūk*, *iḥsān* and *iṣlāḥ*. An ardent globetrotter, Shaykh ʿAbdul Ḥafiẓ had travelled to South Africa to speak at various venues on Sufism and establish gatherings of reformation and *dhikr*, a cause that his own mentor had entrusted him with many years before. His unexpected demise was felt across the globe, leaving many shocked and in grief. The loss of a beloved *murshid* and spiritual father just a few months after losing a kind and compassionate biological father was like dark clouds that had enshrouded me one after the other, a series of blows that still reverberate to this day. Knowing that the *Mawqif* project was still incomplete added to the misery and it was during this period of sadness and loss that I then completed the editing of the final chapter and published it on Deoband.org. I had only one regret: I wished I had completed and published it when shaykh was alive, seen his face glow with happiness, and heard from his lips words of encouragement, happiness and supplication. May the Most High enlighten his grave, grant him peace, and provide him with all the comforts of the hereafter.

It was the way of our shaykh and that of his shaykh that the books that they published would not be subject to any sort of copyright, nor did they earn any royalties from their writings. The goal was simply to publish books with the hope for divine

reward in the hereafter. As translator I have likewise forfeited any income from this book; in fact, the publishers have been carefully selected for their non-profit ethos and pledge to keep the cover price as low as possible to ensure its affordability and wide reach.

In translating this book, I have often compared cited excerpts with their original books and sporadically marked this in the footnotes. All of Shaykh ʿAbdul Ḥafīẓ's footnotes have been included in this work and have been supplanted with additional footnotes from myself that have been marked with the initials "IN" in brackets.

Lastly, the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said: "He who does not thank people has not thanked Allah." It would be inappropriate to conclude this introduction without mentioning the various people who have directly and indirectly supported me in this project. First of all, I would like to thank the late Shaykh ʿAbdul Ḥafīẓ al-Makki for his support, supplications and mentorship; Mawlānā ʿAbdur Raheem Limbada for the original suggestion and encouragement; Mawlānā Asad Makki who as shaykh's *khalīfah* often provided me with words of support and took a keen interest in this project; Mawlānā Hamood Aleem, Mufti Husain Kadodia and Dr. Hanif Kamal from Deoband.org for supporting and serializing the online publishing of this work; Mawlānā Tameem Ahmadi and his team at Nur Publications who kindly and gladly took up the offer to publish this book; Dr. Saleem Niazi who spent

several months painstakingly going through the manuscript with a fine comb; Khidhr Subhani who ardently followed the online publishing of this book and assisted in preparing the manuscript for publishing; and lastly my parents, wife and children for their support. May Allah reward them all in the best of ways in both worlds, accept this translation, and make it a means of guidance and salvation for people in the hereafter.

Ismaeel Nakhuda
Preston, United Kingdom
12 Sha'ban, 1439
28 April 2018

Author's Biography

Shaykh ʿAbdul Ḥafīẓ al-Makki ﷺ was one of the foremost *khalifas* and leading students of Shaykh al-Hadith Mawlānā Muḥammad Zakariyyā al-Kāndahlawī. Born in pre-partition India in 1946 in the city of Amritsar, Punjab, Shaykh ʿAbdul Ḥafiẓ's family had settled there from Kashmir some fifty years earlier. Shaykh was a descendant of Rājā ʿAbdus Salām Malik who had accepted Islam at the hands of Amīr Kabīr Sayyid Ali al-Hamdānī, a famous fourteenth century Sufi scholar who visited Kashmir to propagate Islam. Rājā ʿAbdus Salām was the ruler of the sub-district of Kuligam, an area surrounding the town of Islamabad in Kashmir.

At partition, Shaykh's family joined the mass exodus of Muslims migrating to Pakistan and came to live in Faisalabad. It was there that Shaykh began his education and learned to recite the Qur'ān under his paternal grandmother who would teach

local children. Troubled by the turmoil of partition and the pitiful state of those affected, Shaykh ʿAbdul Ḥafīẓ's father left Pakistan in 1953 and migrated to Makkah where he obtained Saudi nationality in 1960.

While in Makkah, Shaykh studied the Qu'rān once more with *tajwīd* under Qārī ʿAbdur Ra'ūf, a teacher at Al-Madrasa al-Ṣawlatiyya. He also enrolled at at Makkah's Al-Madrasa al-Saʿdiyya in 1954 where he gained both a religious and secular education.

Having completed his secondary education in 1964, Shaykh was instructed by his father Ḥājī Malik ʿAbdul Ḥaqq—who was a famous factory owner, one of the responsible individuals of the Tablīghī Jamaʿa in the Ḥijāz and also a *khalīfa* of Shaykh al-Hadith Mawlānā Zakariyyā—to spend a year in Tablīgh in the company of the then Amīr of the movement, Mawlānā Yusuf al-Kāndahlawī, author of *Ḥayāt al-Ṣaḥābah*. During this time, Shaykh ʿAbdul Ḥafīẓ was also blessed with the close company of Mawlānā Inʿām al-Ḥasan who became the Amīr of Tablīgh for thirty years after Mawlānā Yusuf's demise.

In 1965, with the permission of his father and at the direction of Mawlānā Inʿām al-Ḥasan, Shaykh became a *murīd* of Shaykh al-Hadith Mawlānā Muḥammad Zakariyyā al-Kāndahlawī. On returning to Makkah, Shaykh remained involved in the work of Tablīgh within Saudi Arabia and studied various books of the Dars-i-Niẓāmī.

A couple of years later in 1967, Shaykh ʿAbdul Ḥafīẓ travelled to the famous north Indian seat of learning, Maẓāhir al-ʿUlūm, in Sahāranpūr, and under the tutelage of the famous and erudite scholars there studied the *Mawqūf ʿAlayh*—those

parts of the Dars-e-Niẓāmī that students need to cover to gain admission to the final year of hadith studies known as the *Dawra al-Hadith*.

After studying there for some time, Shaykh returned to Makkah al-Mukarramah where he continued his studies. The following year in 1968, he returned to Sahāranpūr and completed the *Dawra al-Hadith*. This was also the final year that Shaykh al- Hadith Mawlānā Muḥammad Zakariyyā lectured on Imām al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥiḥ*. Shaykh was also blessed with the opportunity of coming first in the final year exams.

At the tender age of twenty on 27 Ramaḍān 1386 (1966), Shaykh was granted permission by Shaykh Zakariyyā during *iʿtikāf* at Maẓāhir al-ʿUlūm's Dār-e-Jadīd Masjid. On the occasion, Shaykh Zakariyyā took off his turban and placed it on Shaykh's head, granting him permission in the four *ṭarīqahs:* Chishtī, Naqshbandī, Suharwardī and Qādrī.

Right until the death of Ḥaḍrat Shaykh al-Hadith Mawlānā Muḥammad Zakariyyā al-Kāndahlawī in 1982, Shaykh ʿAbdul Ḥafiẓ remained devoted to his shaykh's service and would not allow any sort of family, business or educational preoccupations to prevent him from remaining in his company. This was especially the case during the blessed months of Ramaḍān.

While Shaykh Zakariyyā was alive, all of Shaykh ʿAbdul Ḥafiẓ's activities—from lecturing hadith at al-Madrasa al-Ṣawlatiyya, to travelling for Tablīgh to the US, Japan, India, Pakistan, Africa and various Middle Eastern countries—were done with the blessings and instruction of his shaykh. Under the guidance and direction of his shaykh and with the aim of widely circulating his academic works, Shaykh established

al-Maktaba al-Imdādīyya in Makkah and al-Rashīd Printing Press in Madinah.

On numerous occasions Shaykh spent a considerable amount of time in Egypt, supervising the publication of Shaykh Zakariyyā's *Awjaz al-Masālik*, a multi-volume commentary on Imam Mālik's *al-Muwaṭṭa'* and considered one of the best, as well as Mawlānā Khalīl Aḥmad al-Sahāranpūrī's *Badhl al-Majhūd*, a voluminous commentary, on the *Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, which is considered an authority on the subject.

Shaykh's meticulous efforts in the publication of these works won Shaykh Zakariyyā's admiration, love and heartfelt supplications. This is something that Shaykh Zakariyyā has mentioned time and again on numerous occasions in his autobiography, *Āp Bītī*.

Since Shaykh Zakariyyā's demise, Shaykh 'Abdul Ḥafīẓ continued to keep his shaykh's academic and spiritual legacy alive by publishing various Arabic and Urdu books, including a twenty-four-volume commentary of Imām al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥiḥ* entitled *Al-Kanz al-Mutawārī*, which contains the commentary of Imām Rabbānī Mawlānā Rashīd Aḥmad al-Gangōhī and other senior Deobandi *'ulamā'*.

Having lived in the Ḥijāz the majority of his life, Shaykh 'Abdul Ḥafīẓ was constantly involved in enlightening the Arab world about the academic efforts of the elders of Deoband and their mode of Taṣawwuf. His *murīds* and those that obtained permission to narrate hadith *(ijāza)* from him, from the Middle East and beyond, number in the thousands. Beyond the Ḥijāz, Shaykh would travel the world regularly—especially to the Indian Sub-Continent, Africa, Europe, North America and the

Far East—calling people to Taṣawwuf, with thousands flocking to benefit from his landmark visits, spiritual gatherings and lectures. It was during one of these trips to South Africa that Shaykh ʿAbdul Ḥafiẓ passed away on Monday, January 16th in Pietermaritzburg after the Maghrib prayers. He had arrived at Johannesburg a few days earlier. *"Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return."* (2:156) Shaykh's funeral prayer was held after the Fajr prayers at the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah on Thursday, January 19th, and he was buried in Jannat al-Baqīʿ, a short distance from the final resting place of the Prophet ﷺ and in close proximity to his mentor, Shaykh al-Hadith Mawlānā Muḥammad Zakariyyā al-Kāndahlawī ؒ.

Introduction

All praise is for Allah. We praise Him, seek His aid and forgiveness, believe in Him and place our trust in Him. We seek refuge with Allah from the mischief of our selves and the wickedness of our deeds. Whoever Allah guides, there is none that can lead astray, and whoever He leads astray there is none that can guide. I bear testimony that there is none worthy of worship except Allah alone; He has no partner. I bear testimony that our Master and Leader Muḥammad ﷺ is His slave and Messenger. May Allah bless him, his family, his companions, his wives and his followers, and grant them peace.

It is clear to the intelligent among the people of Islam that the ideological *fitnas* and ideas of false groups began spreading their poison through Islamic communities, particularly after—through the favor and *tawfīq* (accordance) of Allah—the

effects of the Islamic awakening began to appear globally. All those driven by desire and personal motives wished to advance their own interests through this blessed phenomenon. How many enemies of Islam have brought clear disbelief and pure falsehood, wrongly and misleadingly claiming this to be the true Islam?

It is not only Islam that has been afflicted by such oppression and slander, but the *salaf* (Predecessors) have also been afflicted, and so we see men of whim and desire bringing forth isolated and wrong views, saying they are the views of the Predecessors and then leading astray naive and simple people who hold dear the faith of the true Pious Predecessors ﷺ. They spread among them corrupt views and false beliefs that go against the fundamentals of religion and the ways and views of the Pious Predecessors. These poor people are then impressed by their intense propaganda by which they become deluded, led astray and ruined.

It was not long ago when Juhayman al-ʿUtaybī and his armed group came into the Ḥaram of Makkah and terrified the slaves of Allah among the *ḥājīs,* and those performing ʿUmrah and offering prayers. This continued until the distinguishing features of Islam such as the call to prayer and the prayer itself were suspended for half a month, and the noble Ḥaram's courtyards became filled with filth and dirt for that entire duration. Then, in front of the Kaʿbah, these people, adhering to the corrupt views and beliefs of the Kharijites, falsely claimed one of their own to be the awaited Mahdi; they spread corruption, all in the name of the *salaf.*

Allah is witness that the *salaf* have no connection whatsoever with all of this and that not a single individual from amongst the Pious Predecessors ﷺ has ever mentioned anything that these people said. They have, by using the word *salaf*, only intended their predecessors from the Kharijites and those who spread corruption and their like. As for the *salaf* of the Muslims, the Pious Predecessors, I swear by the Lord of the Kaʿbah that they are innocent of such divergence.

Likewise, sometimes we hear some of these people slandering and taunting those who follow a particular Imām in matters of jurisprudence, i.e. those who follow a madhhab of one of the four agreed upon *mujtahids* —Imām Abū Hanīfah, Imām Mālik, Imām al-Shāfiʿī and Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal ﷺ. [These are the Imāms] who the Ummah and its scholars have been in concensus on regarding the permissibility of following in matters of Fiqh, since the first century. Despite this, some of these astray people can be seen in many regions of the globe spreading their falsehood and claiming that the following of one of the four Imāms, we seek refuge with Allah, is a misguided innovation. In fact, some of them are even bold enough to say that it is a deviation and a form of polytheism. Again, with great regret, this is all taking place in the oppressed name of the Pious Predecessors.

These people have forgotten, or pretend to forget, that the Imāms of religion and guidance, the authorities of knowledge and faith who acted upon these *madhhabs* and followed their own respected Imāms—the likes of al-Ṭaḥāwī, al-ʿAynī, al-Ālūsī, al-Qārī, al-Zaylāʿī, al-Dahlawī (from the Ḥanafīs), al-Nawawī, al-ʿAsqalānī, al-Ghazālī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Dhahabī,

al-Suyūṭī (from the Shāfiʿīs), al-Qurṭubī, al-Bājī, Ibn ʿAbdul Barr, Ibn al-ʿArabī (from the Mālikīs), Ibn ʿĀqil, Ibn Qudāma, al-Jilānī, al-Maqdisī and Ibn ʿAbdul Hādī (from the Ḥanbalīs), and also the Imāms of the Salafis such as Ḥāfiẓ Ibn al-Qayyim, Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī, Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb and many tens of thousands of erudite Imāms and scholars—would live up to the unsound opinion of being "polytheists and innovators." Yes, these people are considering the Imāms of the Predecessors to be astray, disbelievers and innovators—all in the name of the Pious Predecessors. Glory is for Allah! As the saying goes: "Insanity comes in many forms." We ask Allah for wellbeing.

Likewise, we hear the calls of those who say that Taṣawwuf in its entirety is baseless and the Sufis are a deviated sect that is not connected to Islam. They are rather the enemies of the faith and their origin lies in Greece and Buddhist India... and so continue their lies. Once again, with great regret, all of this is taking place in the poor name of the Predecessors. The truth in reality is different. According to the Imāms and revered personalities of the Salafi movement itself, the Sufis are an Islamic group like other Islamic groups, such as the hadith experts (*muḥaddiths*), jurists (*faqīhs*), theologians (*mutakallims*), historians and *mujāhids* etc. Among them are the correct and incorrect, the pious and impious, the authentic and false.

However, whenever one of these groups is mentioned, the pious, correct and authentic among them is always intended. For example, if we were to refer to "the hadith scholars," then the intention would always be, according to all, the pious hadith scholars who—on behalf of the Ummah—preserved, served

and propagated the hadiths of the Prophet of Allah ﷺ in the correct and proper fashion, such as Imām al-Bukhārī, Imām Muslim, Imām al-Tirmidhī, Imām Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, Imām al-Suyūṭī and Imām al-Kāndahlawī, etc.

The word "*muḥaddith*" in its general sense is never used by anyone to intend those charlatans, liars and fabricators who affiliated themselves to this noble group, and whose corruption and fraud was exposed by the Imāms of *al-jarḥ wa al-taʿdīl* (the science of evaluating and critiquing narrators) in every time and age, as is widely known. This is the situation with regards to the jurists, theologians, *mujāhids*, historians, and other Muslim groups. Likewise, this should also be the case with the Sufis. When the word Sufi is mentioned, the likes of Fuḍayl ibn ʿIyād, Maʿrūf al-Karkhī, Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī, Bishr al-Ḥāfi, ʿAbdul Qādir al-Jilānī, Junayd al-Baghdādī and many others who treaded their righteous path are intended. The word Sufi should never be used to mean those impostors who were astray and who in practice strayed from and opposed the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet of Allah ﷺ; they are strangers in matters of Taṣawwuf, and highwaymen in the path to Allah and the hereafter.

In fact, on the basis of our understanding of religion (all praise is for Allah since it is only by His kindness and *tawfīq* that we remain steadfast) and the methodology of our teachers (*mashāyikh*) ﷺ, we understand that even the words of the likes of Fuḍayl, Bishr, al-Dārānī, Junayd, al-Ghazālī, al-Jilānī, and many other great Imāms and others besides them, would at times be taken and at times be left. This would, however, never be the case for the sayings of the truthful and proven-to-be

honest Prophet of Allah ﷺ. The proof (*ḥujjah*) shall always remain the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet ﷺ. Hence, we shall consider ourselves at the service of whomever we find in accordance with the teachings and principles of these two authorities. We shall not consider those who oppose the principles and teachings of the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet of Allah ﷺ to carry any authority whatsoever. For us, Allah is enough and He is the best trustee.

Due to this *fitna* (the opposition to Taṣawwuf and the Sufis) arising among some in the name of the *salaf*, it is necessary upon the scholars—being both the inheritors of the Prophets ﷺ and people of truth—to strive to prevent and combat this problem. This is something for which they will be asked and [is] a major obligation; there is no room for negligence due to its importance.

The Prophet of Allah ﷺ said: "This sacred knowledge shall be borne by reliable authorities from each generation who will preserve it from the distortions of extremists, the plans of the corrupt, and the false explanations of the ignorant."[1] In another hadith narrated by Sayyidunā Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī ؓ, the Prophet of Allah ﷺ said: "Whoever from among you sees a wrong, he should rectify it with his hand, and if he is unable to do so, then by speech, and if he is unable to do either, then with his heart he should consider it to be wrong—and that is the weakest degree of faith."[2] Sayyidunā Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī

1— Narrated *mursal* by *Al-Bayhaqī* in *Kitāb al-Madkhal* on the authority of Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAbdul Raḥmān al-ʿUdhrī.

2— Narrated by Muslim.

ﷺ has also narrated in a lengthy hadith that the Prophet of Allah ﷺ said: "The fear of people should not prevent any of you from saying the truth when he knows it." In another narration it is mentioned: "If he sees a wrong, then he should change it."[3]

The scholars have—praise be to Allah—begun to combat this *fitna* in many places and are fulfilling their religious obligation in establishing the truth. May Allah reward them, increase their success and aid them further with His divine help.

I have felt the need to compile, in one book, the sayings of the Imāms of the Salafi movement regarding Taṣawwuf, its various issues, and their words of praise and commendation for the Sufi shaykhs, thus making it clear that it is false and slanderous to attribute to those Imāms sayings such as: "Taṣawwuf in its entirety is baseless and the Sufis are a deviated sect that is not connected to Islam. They are rather the enemies of the faith and their origin lies in Greece and Buddhist India..."

I mentioned my idea to some people of knowledge and piety, who lent me their support and encouraged me to begin work due to the religious necessity attached to it. I therefore performed the *istikhāra* prayer and made a firm intention, placing my trust in Him, and asking only Him for assistance, guidance and correctness. I then began work with His divine *tawfīq*. Oh Allah, our hearts, limbs and forelocks are in Your hands. You have not made us owners of any one of these things and since You have made us like this (i.e., helpless) then, oh our Lord, oh Most Generous, be our patron and guide us to the straight path. Oh Allah, inspire us to the correct outcome of our

3— Narrated in *Sunan Al-Tirmidhī* as mentioned in *Al-Mishkāt*.

dealings, and grant us refuge from the mischief of ourselves and the evil of our deeds. Bring our hearts toward You and grant us *tawfīq* of that which You love and are pleased with in speech, action, intention and guidance. Indeed, You are, over all things, most powerful. *Āmīn.*

In spite of my various engagements and many misdeeds, I began work by first of all selecting the writings of Imām Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb and Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah. I thereafter selected four more great personalities from the leaders and Īmams of the Salafi movement because of the trust placed by Imām Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb on their knowledge and leadership, and due to the fact they are all from among the foremost students of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah ﷺ.

Imām Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb writes:

> ...and without fearing for you those innovations which people had introduced in their religion and those things in which they opposed the way of their predecessors. I found the majority of people from the latter ages had changed and become different. Their leaders and Imāms, the most knowledgable among them, the most worshipful among them, and the most abstinent among them — such as Ibn al-Qayyim, Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī, Ḥāfiẓ al-ʿImād Ibn Kathīr and Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab—were most stern in reprīmānding the people of their time...[4]

4— *Muʾallafāt al-Shaykh al-Imām Muḥammad ibn* ʿAbdul *Wahhāb*, vol. 5, *Al-Rasāʾil al-Shakhṣiyya.*

These four, with the above-mentioned two, brings the total number of shaykhs whose writings I will present to six. After this, for the crowning touch and to make the total number an odd number, I felt I should include the Imām of the leaders of the Salafis and also the Imām of the Ahl al-Sunnah, Imām Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥanbal al-Shaybānī (may Allah sanctify his soul). These seven Imāms are the central pivots (*quṭubs*) of the Salafi movement. I have compiled these quotations with great haste; there are other quotations by these Imāms on the same subject that are more than what is mentioned here that I have left out. This is a mere sample from the anecdotes of these Imāms regarding Taṣawwuf and the Sufis. I have also tried my utmost to present their speech clearly and plainly, and have only added footnotes at times of dire necessity so their correct stance may become clear.

I hope that Allah Most High, through His kindness and generosity, makes this work a means of exposing the truth, and a way by which veils may be lifted from hearts and eyes. We ask Allah Most High that He grants us the ability to live, die and be resurrected on that upon which the saved group, the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāʿah, is on. May He allow us to be raised under the banner of their Imām, their master, their *mawlā*, their commander, their beloved, the beloved of the Lord of the Worlds, the leader of the prophets and messengers, he who is the mercy for the worlds and a noble example in all affairs for all believers, Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdullah al-Qurayshī al-Hāshimī —may Allah bless him, his entire family, his companions,

his wives and his followers forever and ever till the Day of Judgement. May He, with His mercy and generosity, allow us to be amongst them. Indeed, He is the Most Compassionate. Our final prayer is that indeed all praise is for Allah, the Cherisher of the worlds.

Written by he who is in most need of his Generous Lord,
Shaykh ʿAbdul Ḥafiẓ Malik ʿAbdul Ḥaq al-Makki
Makkah al-Mukarramah,
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
7/3/1407 AH

IMĀM SHAYKH

MUḤAMMAD IBN ʿABDUL WAHHĀB

AL-NAJDĪ AL-ḤANBALĪ

THE IMĀM MUḤAMMAD IBN SAUD ISLAMIC University in Riyadh held a "Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb Week" in which all of the shaykh's writings were distributed in twelve volumes. Through the grace of Allah, I studied each volume page by page and never came across any place in which Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb criticises, refutes or rejects Taṣawwuf or any one of the Sufi shaykhs on account of their Taṣawwuf. These books are easily available and sold in markets and bookstores; it is possible for anyone to acquire and study them and verify that which I shall mention here.

Rather, I came across several passages in his writings that clearly and plainly elucidate his clear position regarding Taṣawwuf and the Sufi shaykhs ﷺ. I shall, with the *tawfīq* and favor of Allah, mention these in the following [text] and it is upon He Most High that all trust is placed.

1. *Mu'allafāt al-Imām al-Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb*, chapter regarding *Fatāwa wa Masā'il* (vol. 3, p. 31, question no. 5). Compiled, revised and compared with the original by Shaykh Ṣāliḥ ibn ʿAbdul Raḥmān al-Aṭram and Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdul Razzāq al-Duways. The shaykh upon being asked an important question replied:

Let it be known—may Allah guide you—that Allah Most High sent Muḥammad ﷺ with guidance, which is known as the beneficial knowledge, and true religion, which is virtuous actions.

When [it is the case that] among those who affiliate themselves to religion, there are those who focus on knowledge and *Fiqh* and speak regarding it, such as the jurists, and those who focus on worship and the quest for the hereafter, such as the Sufis, then Allah has sent His Prophet with this all-inclusive religion for these two reasons.[5]

From amongst the greatest things with which Allah has strengthened him ﷺ and his Ummah is that He gave him ﷺ the Jawāmiʿ al-Kalim [the Qur'ān]. Allah mentions in His Book one word that becomes an all-inclusive principle under which innumerable issues come.

Likewise, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ spoke comprehensively. Whoever understands this issue well will understand that which He Most High mentions: *"Today I have completed for you your religion."* (5:3) This verse is also from among those that are comprehensive and concise…

5— This is clearly *Fiqh* and Taṣawwuf.

2. *Muʾallafāt al-Imām al-Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb*, chapter regarding *Fiqh* (vol. 2, p. 4). The shaykh writes in a treatise entitled *Arbaʿa Qawāʿid Tadūr al-Aḥkām ʿalayha* (*Four Principles Around Which Rulings Revolve*):

Know—may Allah have mercy on you— that religion revolves around these four sentences in spite of their brevity; this is regardless of whether the speaker is speaking regarding the science of *Tafsīr*, the science of *Uṣūl* [principles of *Fiqh*], the science of the deeds of the heart, which is known as the science of Sulūk,[6] the science of hadith, the science of that which is permissible and impermissible and rulings which is known as the science of *Fiqh*, or regarding the knowledge of the rewards and punishments that arise from good and bad deeds (*waʿd* and *waʿīd*), or regarding any other religious science apart from these…

3. *Muʿallafāt al-Imām al-Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb*, chapter regarding *Tafsīr* and *Mukhtaṣar Zād al-Maʿād* (vol. 4, p. 84). In the section regarding the Prophet's ﷺ guidance during *iʿtikāf*, the shaykh writes:

When the piety of the heart and its steadfastness in its journey to Allah Most High is dependent on its connection to Allah; and [when] the disorder of the heart can only be rectified by its complete attachment to Him (for the disarrangement of the heart can only be corrected by turning to Him); and [when] excessive drink and food, socializing with people, sleep and talk are from among those elements that increase its disorientation,

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6— This is obviously Taṣawwuf.

disperse it in every valley, and separate, weaken, hamper and stop it in its journey to Allah Most High, then the wisdom of He Who is Powerful and Merciful has made it necessary on His slaves that a number of fasts be prescribed that would end the excessive consumption of food and drink, and vacate the heart from a mixture of carnal desires that have hampered it in its path to Allah. A suitable amount [of fasts] has been prescribed through which the slave may derive benefit in the affairs of his world and the hereafter, and not harm him.

I'tikāf has been prescribed for them, the purpose and spirit of which is to devote the heart to Allah, separate it from the creation and preoccupy it with He alone. As a result, the individual becomes intimate and friendly (*unsiyya*) with Allah instead of the creation. Hence, due to this intimacy with Allah, he will consider the time spent in solitude to be the time of loneliness in the grave.

When it is the case that this objective can only be accomplished through fasting, *i'tikāf* has been prescribed in the best days of fasts, which are the last ten days of Ramaḍān. Allah Most High has also only mentioned *i'tikāf* with fasting, and the Prophet of Allah ﷺ only remained in *i'tikāf* while fasting.

As far as talk is concerned, He has decreed that the Ummah restrain their tongues from all speech that is not beneficial in the hereafter.

As to excessive sleep, He has prescribed for them the prayer of the night, which is the best of all vigils and most praiseworthy in outcome, and that is the prayer of the middle of the night which benefits the heart and the body and does not hamper the interests of the slave. The focus of the religious exercises

of the people of spiritual exercises and Sulūk[7] is on these four principles. Fortunate from among them in this is he who treads the Muḥammadan way and does not diverge like those who are extreme and does not lax like those who are slack. We have mentioned his guidance in fasting, praying and speech, now we shall mention his guidance in *iʿtikāf*.

4. *Muʾallafāt al-Imām al-Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb*, (appendix, p. 182), the shaykh writes in *Hādhihī Masāʾil*:

It is known that the Ummah has been ordered to propagate the Qurʾān, its words and its meaning; its propagation to the non-Arabs is done by translation. When a learned believer studies all philosophical writings and other such works written by other nations, he will find the Qurʾān and the Sunnah revealing their condition, explaining their reality, and distinguishing between truth and falsehood. The Companions ﷺ were the most knowledgeable of the creation regarding this; they were most firm in fighting the disbelievers and hypocrites. As Sayyidunā ʿAbdullah ibn Masʿūd ﷺ said: "Whosoever wishes to follow a way then let him follow the way of those who have died for indeed the living are not immune from *fitna*. Those Companions of Muḥammad ﷺ were the most devout of heart, in-depth in knowledge and the least affectatious. They were a nation chosen by Allah for the companionship of His Prophet and the establishment of His religion. For their sake, understand their right and hold fast to their way for they were on an upright course."

7— And these are the Sufis, as is known.

He has informed regarding them that they possessed complete righteous hearts and complete in-depth knowledge. This is something seldom found amongst the people of the latter times; it is as it is said: "From among the wonders is to find a Sufi who is a *Faqīh* and a scholar who is an ascetic (*zāhid*)."

For indeed many associate a lack of knowledge with those who are concerned with the piety of the heart—something that necessitates forbidding wrong and *jihād*. And at times those who have in-depth knowledge mention such wickedness and doubts that it places them in error and deviation.

The majority of those who have in-depth knowledge from among the theologians and devout worshippers of the latter times are associated with blameworthy and affectatious behavior—that is, to speak and act without knowledge and to seek that which cannot be realized—[and this is] contrary to what the Companions were upon.

This [the Qurʾān] is Allah's favor on this Ummah, as is found in the saying of Sayyidunā ʿĪsa: "I give to them from my knowledge and forbearance." [The Qurʾān] is one of the special things that continues after the Prophet ﷺ. Hence, whosoever is the most adherent to it, he shall be the most perfect in relation to it.

5. *Muʾallafāt al-Imām al-Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb* (appendix, p. 24). The shaykh writes in *Hādhihī Masāʾil* following a delicate discussion on those who have rejected the love of Allah and those who have affirmed it:

So, His love itself is the basis of His worship, and assigning equals in love is the basis of polytheism in His worship. These are those who resemble the Christians; in them is a form of polytheism of the type that the Christians possess.

This is why the Sufi shaykhs who know Allah (*ʿārifs*) would advise many to pursue knowledge. Some of them would say: "A person only leaves a single Sunnah due to the pride in him."

It is like the saying: Indeed, when he does not follow that which the Prophet ﷺ brought, then he is pursuing his carnal desires without any guidance from Allah. This is living according to the whim of the *nafs* and a form of pride, for indeed it is a branch from the sayings of those who said: "We shall only accept faith if we are given the likes of that which was given to the Messengers of Allah."

6. Shaykh Muḥammad Manẓūr Nuʿmānī[8] writes in his book, *Diʿāyāt Mukaththafa Ḍidd al-Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb*[9] (p. 76) that Shaykh ʿAbdullah, the son of Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb, has written a booklet that throws light on his father's *daʿwa* and movement. In it he writes:

We informed them that, indeed, that which we believe and the way by which we worship Allah, in the matters of religion, is the way of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāʿah and the predecessors (*salaf*) of this Ummah. As to matters of jurisprudence, we follow the *madhhab* of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. We do not refute those who follow the four Imāms, or consider ourselves to be worthy of *ijtihād*, nor does anyone among us claim as such. However, in certain issues when there is an evident text from the Book of Allah or the Sunnah—that has not been abrogated, nor in any way specified (*makhṣūṣ*), nor contradicted

8— Former head of the faculty of Hadith at Dār al-ʿUlūm Nadwa al-ʿUlamā', Lucknow, and member of the board at Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband.

9— Published by Maktabat al-Furqan, Lucknow.

by a stronger text, and one of the four Imāms has mentioned it— then we would take that position and leave the *madhhab*. Indeed, the opinions of some of the Imāms within the four *madhhabs*, in some matters of *Fiqh* have differed from the way of those who firmly follow (*taqlīd*) the *madhhab's* founder...

Shaykh ʿAbdullah ibn Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb ends his treatise saying:

We do not negate the way of the Sufis and the purification of the inner self from the vices of those sins connected to the heart and the limbs as long as the individual firmly adheres to the rules of Sharīʿah and the correct and observed way. However, we will not take it on ourselves to allegorically interpret (*taʾwīl*) his speech and his actions. We only place our reliance on, seek help from, beseech aid from and place our confidence in all our dealings in Allah Most High. He is enough for us, the best trustee, the best *mawlā* and the best helper. May Allah send peace on our master Muḥammad, his family and companions.[10]

10— *Al-Hadiyyah al-Sanīyyah* (page 50). Shaykh ʿAbdullah ibn Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb al-Najdī's letter, a portion of which we have presented here, is included in a collection of epistles that illustrate the *daʿwa* of Shaykh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb, entitled *Al-Hadiyyah al-Sanniyyah*. I have before me its second edition published with the commentary of the late ʿAllāmah Rashīd Riḍā, proprietor of *Al-Manār* magazine, from Al-Manār Publishers in Egypt (1344 AH).

IMĀM ḤĀFIẒ

ABŪ ʿABDULLAH IBN ABŪ BAKR IBN AL-QAYYIM AL-JAWZIYYA

AL-DIMASHQĪ AL-ḤANBALĪ

IMĀM ḤĀFIẒ IBN AL-QAYYIM IS KNOWN FOR HIS DEPTH in the matters and intricacies of Taṣawwuf. His great book *Madārij al-Sālikīn* bears testimony to this. I shall, *inshā'*Allah, quote some important sections of his precious words relating to Taṣawwuf.

Prior to this, to convey his personage as understood by the people of both the earlier and latter times in relation to Sufism, I wish to quote two short biographies of Ḥāfiẓ Ibn al-Qayyim. The first is by Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī, and the second by Professor Muḥammad Mūsāllam al-Ghunaymī, author of the book, *Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya.*[11]

11— This is an excellent book regarding the life of Ibn al-Qayyim, published by Al-Maktab al-Islami,Beirut.

1. Imām Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī writes in *Al-Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (vol. 2, p.448):

Muḥammad ibn Abū Bakr ibn Ayyūb ibn Saʿd ibn Jurayz al-Zarʿī, then al-Dimashqī, the jurist, the theoretician (*uṣūlī*), the exegete (*mufassir*), the grammarian (*naḥwī*), the knower of Allah (*ʿārif*), *Shams al-Dīn* (the Light of the Faith) Abū ʿAbdullah ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya, our shaykh, was born in 691 AH...

He mastered the *madhhab*,[12] became distinguished, and delivered *fatwas*. He stayed in the company of Shaykh Taqī al-Dīn and acquired knowledge from him. He gained in-depth knowledge in the sciences of Islam. He knew *Tafsīr*, a subject in which none could contend with him, and also principles (*uṣūl*) of faith; these were two sciences in which he was at the pinnacle of knowledge. He also knew hadith, their meanings and understanding, and the art of deducing fine points from them; these in which he he had no peer. He knew *Fiqh* and its principles and also Arabic, a language in which he was most proficient. Apart from this, he studied belief (*kalam*), grammar and other sciences.

He was a scholar of the knowledge of Sulūk and a scholar of the speech of the people of Taṣawwuf, their instructions and intricate matters. In each of these sciences he was a specialist...

He, may Allah mercy on him, was a man of worship and someone who performed the Tahajjud prayer. He would prolong prayers to the utmost limit. He was a man of Allah. He was constantly in the remembrance of Allah; fond of the love of,

12— The Ḥanbalī *madhhab*.

turning in repentance to, seeking forgiveness of and showing a want for Allah, expressing a broken heart to Him, and throwing himself in front of Him on the threshold of His worship. I have never seen his like in that respect.

I have never seen anyone more knowledgeable than him and more acquainted with the meanings of the Qur'ān, the Sunnah and the realities of faith than him. He was not infallible. However, I have never seen anyone of his like in the meaning of the word. He was tested and troubled many times. He was imprisoned with Shaykh Taqī al-Dīn on the last occasion in the citadel in isolation from him. He did not leave the shaykh until he died.

During his imprisonment, he remained occupied with the recitation of the Qur'ān, which he used to do with meditation and contemplation. On account of this, great goodness opened to him and he experienced a great deal of spiritual bliss (*dhawq*) and authentic ecstatic states (*wajd*). As a result, he became overcome with speaking about the knowledge of the people of *maʿrifa*[13] and delving into their mysteries. His writings are full of this.

He performed the Hajj numerous times and took up residence in Makkah. The people of Makkah used to remember him for his intense level of worship and abundant *ṭawāf*, something that they would marvel at. I attended his gatherings before his death for over a year and, in his presence, listened to his lengthy ode, *Al-Nūnīyya*, and things from his books etc.

13— They are the Sufi shaykhs.

2. Professor Muḥammad Mūsāllam al-Ghunaymi writes in his book *Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah* (p.136):

Ibn al-Qayyim was a favorite of his shaykh, Ibn Taymīyyah, who would treat him like a son; as a matter of fact he was his spiritual son. He used to see in him goodness and righteousness, and used to see him as a blessing from Allah sent to complete that which he used to call to, i.e. the correcting of thoughts, rectifying the faith, freeing it from those things that are not from it and which the passing of centuries had attached to it, returning it to that understanding on which the predecessors of this Ummah were on in terms of belief, jurisprudence and Taṣawwuf, and liberating it from the noose of those who do *taqlīd*, which they had made religion.

In a section regarding the writings of Ḥāfiẓ Ibn al-Qayyim, al-Ghunaymī writes (p.111):

1. He has compiled books on jurisprudence and the principles of jurisprudence... 2. In Taṣawwuf: *Madārij al-Sālikīn*, the commentary of *Manāzil al-Sā'irīn*, *'Idda al-Ṣābirīn wa Dhakīrah al-Shākirīn* and *Ḥādi al-Arwāḥ ilā Bilād al-Afrāḥ*. 3. In the science of theology and debate: *Shifā al-'Alīl* ...

Professor al-Ghunaymī also writes in the introduction to his book:

> ...It is impossible to write regarding this great Imām. Perhaps Allah will inspire the lovers of good and righteousness to write about him in relation to those fields in which he excelled, i.e. *Fiqh*, Hadith, *Tafsīr*,

Taṣawwuf and monotheism. Writing on this is very important. By doing so, his personality would be manifested in its fullest sense—for he was a *Faqīh*, a hadith scholar, an exegete (*Mufassir*), a Sufi (*Mutaṣawwif*), and a proclaimer of monotheism of a fashion different from that which is known of the *Faqīhs*, exegetes and hadith scholars. It is apparent that indeed Ibn al-Qayyim is one of the greatest men, not just one among noteworthy men of Islam.

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn al-Qayyim wrote *Madārij al-Sālikīn*, which is a commentary on the excellent book of Taṣawwuf, *Manāzil al-Sā'irīn*. Before I quote some of the words of Ḥāfiẓ Ibn al-Qayyim, I would like to present the biography of [*Manāzil al-Sā'irīn's*] author, the great Sufi Imām Abū Ismāʿīl al-Hirawī—[a biography written by] the great Salafi Imām, Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī. The following clarifies that Imām al-Hirawī's Sufism, and his depth in this science, was obvious to his contemporary shaykhs. In fact, to introduce his personality and avoid confusing him with anyone else, the people of earlier times would rarely mention his name without the word "Sufi."

Imām Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī writes in *Al-Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (vol. 1, p.50):

ʿAbdullah ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn Jaʿfar ibn Manṣūr ibn Mut al-Anṣārī

al-Hirawī, the *Faqīh*, the *Mufassir*, the *Ḥāfiẓ* (of hadith), the Sufi, the orator (*wāʿiẓ*), Shaykh al-Islam Abū Ismāʿīl... he studied [hadith] in Tus[14] and Bastam[15] from a large number of people whose mention would be exhaustive. He stayed in the company of many shaykhs and learnt discipline from them. He gathered anecdotes and commentaries [on hadith] for himself and others from the narrators of hadith. He narrated hadith for many years.

He authored many books, including *Dhamm al-Kalām*, *Al-Fārūq*, *Manāqib al-Imām Aḥmad*, *Manāzil al-Sāʾirīn*, *ʿIlal al-Maqāmāt*, a comprehensive book called *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān* in Persian, an excellent book called *Majālis al-Tadhkīr* which is also in Persian, and others.

He was a great leader and an Imām who was a scholar, a knower of Allah (*ʿārif*), a worshipper and an ascetic (*zāhid*). He was a man of many spiritual states (*aḥwāl*), spiritual stations (*maqāmāt*), miracles and sacrifice. He would remain abundantly awake at night, and was steadfast in aiding and defending the Sunnah and refuting those who opposed it; he was afflicted by many difficulties on account of this. He would greatly defend and exalt the *madhhab* of Imām Aḥmad...

Shaykh Imām Abū Ismāʿīl's shaykhs, contemporaries, and other jurists, hadith scholars, Sufis and writers, etc., praised him. The saying of Saʿd al-Zanjānī concerning him has been mentioned in the biography of ʿAbdul Raḥmān ibn Mandah:

14— Tus is an ancient city in the Iranian province of Razavi Khorasan. The city was almost entirely destroyed by the Mongol horde. (IN)

15— Bastam is located in the historic province of Khurāsān in present-day north-eastern Iran (IN)

"Indeed, Allah has protected Islam through him and through Ibn Mandah."

Al-Rahāwī said: "I heard in Herat that when Shaykh al-Islam was exiled from Herat and reached Marw,[16] and was granted permission to return to Herat, he returned and had reached Marw al-Rawḍ[17] when Imām Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn ibn Masʿūd al-Baghawī al-Farrā', the author of many books, headed for him. When he reached him, he said to the Shaykh al-Islam: "Verily Allah has gathered for you many virtues; but there was yet one virtue which he intended to complete for you: and that is expulsion from one's homeland in the way of the Prophet of Allah ﷺ..."

Imām Abū al-Ḥusayn ʿAbdul Ghāfir ibn Ismāʿīl al-Fārisī, the orator (*khaṭīb*) of Nishapur, has also mentioned him in *Tārīkh Nīsābūr*. He has mentioned his name and lineage. He writes: "Abū Ismāʿīl, the Imām and Shaykh al-Islam of Herat, was a man who was accepted in his age, and known in his time for virtue and [an ability to deliver] excellent speeches and orations. Not one of the Imāms of his respected field was seen even in a dream possessing that which was evidently seen in him in terms of abundant and overpowering bashfulness, unceasing beauty, ability to captivate the elite and common people of that region, ability to coordinate the affairs of [his] *murīds*, followers, and those who devoted to him, ability to unite the

16— Marw or Marw al-Shāhidjan (presently known as Merv) was a city on the north-eastern fringes of Persia. It used to be in the historic province of Khurāsān. The city, now in ruins, falls within Turkmenistan and is a UNESCO World Heritage site. (IN)

17— Marw al-Rawḍ (or Marw-on-the-River) was a town on the Murghab River in mediaeval Khuarasan. It used to be close to the city of Marw. Marw al-Rudh is located today in present day north-west Afghanistan and is known as Bala Murghab. (IN)

madrasas, friends, *khānqāhs*[18], the people of government, and many other qualities that are more well known and not in need of explanation."

"He was proficient in Arabic and the knowledge of hadith, lineage and history; he was a perfect Imām in *Tafsīr* and in delivering orations. He was of excellent conduct and mode in Taṣawwuf. He was a practitioner of Taṣawwuf and would remain in the company of the Sufis.

"He was a bearer of the Sunnah; he would call towards it and encourage it. He would not preoccupy himself with earning means, estates, properties and being absorbed in the world. He would remain content with that amount that would please the *murīds* and followers from his gathering once or twice a year. He would head a gathering to decide what he and his companions would need from one year to another..."

Shaykh al-Islam Abū al-ʿAbbās Ibn Taymīyyah writes in his book, *Al-Ajwiba al-Miṣrīyyah*:

"The Shaykh al-Islam is well-known and revered by the people. He was an Imām in hadith, Taṣawwuf and *Tafsīr*. In *Fiqh*, he followed the school of the hadith scholars; he would exalt al-Shāfiʿī and Aḥmad, and would combine between them in his answers in *Fiqh* with that which agrees with the view of al-Shāfiʿī at times and that which agrees with the view of Aḥmad at times. In hadith he mostly followed the way of Ibn al Mubārak and others like him.

18— A *khānqāh* is a building designed specifically for Sufi gatherings. It is a place for spiritual retreat and character reformation. The word is from Persian and is synonymous with the Arabic words *zāwiya* or *ribāṭ*. (IN)

Ibn Taymīyyah adds:

In his book, *Al-Fuṣūl fī al-Uṣūl*, Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan al-Karkhī—the shaykh of the Shāfiʿīs in his country—wrote: "More than one of the students of Imām ʿAbdullah ibn Muḥammad al-Anṣārī told me that he recited to them this poem as a form of advice for the Ahl al-Sunnah:

When the one who is Ashʿarī in ʿaqīdah and a human Satan diverges from the boundary of guidance, then let him become,

Shāfiʿī in jurisprudence, Sunni in adornment, Ḥanbalī in contract (meaning uṣūl and ʿaqīdah) and Sufi in conduct.

For the purpose of this treatise, I shall now begin—with the permission of Allah and His *tawfīq* — quoting from the writings of the great Salafi Imām, Ḥāfiẓ Ibn al-Qayyim as mentioned in his book *Madārij al-Sālikīn*, which is a commentary of the great book on Taṣawwuf, *Manāzil al-Sā'irīn* by Shaykh al-Islam Abū Ismāʿīl al-Hirawī al-Ṣūfī (may Allah sanctify his secret).

1. Ibn al-Qayyim writes in *Madārij al-Sālikīn* [19] (vol. 1, p.135):

The people of Sulūk differ greatly in the number of spiritual stations (*maqāmāt*) and their sequence. Each one describes the stations of his journey and the condition of his Sulūk. They also differ in some of the stations (*manāzil*) of the journey: are

19— Published by Dar al-Kitab al-ʿArabi, Lebanon.

they a type of spiritual state (*ḥāl*)? The difference between the two (*maqām* and *ḥal*) is that the spiritual stations are acquired (*kasbī*) and the spiritual states are divinely bestowed (*wahbī*).

Among them are those who say that the spiritual states are the results of the stations, and that the stations are the results of actions. So, whoever is the most righteous in action will be the loftiest in station, and whoever is the loftiest in station, he will have the greatest state.

Among those things in which they have differed with regards to satisfaction (*riḍā*) is whether it is a state or a station? In it there is a difference between the people of Khurasan and the people of Iraq. Some of the shaykhs have ruled between them and said: "If it were gained through acquisition (*kasbī*) then it will be a station, otherwise it is a state."

What is correct in this matter is that inspirations (*wāridāt*) and stations have [different] names according to their condition. At their initial appearance and emergence they will be gleaming, shimmering and brilliant in the same way a glimmer of light sparkles and appears from a distance. So, when inspirations come to him (the *sālik*) and he associates with them, then they will be spiritual states (*aḥwāl*), and when they take possession of him and become firm without moving on then they are stations (*maqāmāt*).

They are gleaming and brilliant at the beginning [wāridāt], spiritual states [aḥwāl] in the middle and stations [maqāmāt] at the end. So, that which is shimmering is precisely a state and that which is a state is precisely a station. They are given these names according to their connection to the heart, their [mode of] appearance to it and their steadiness in remaining with it.

The *sālik* at times may be stripped of his station in the same way he is stripped of his clothes and relegated to a level below. He may then at times return and at times not.

Among the stations are those that gather two stations, and among them are those that gather even more than that. Among them are those within which all of the stations are embodied. The one experiencing them is not in need of knowing their name save when all of the stations are gathered in him.

Hence, the station of repentance (*tawba*) consists of the station of self-examination (*muḥāsaba*) and the station of fear (*khawf*); its existence [*tawba's*] cannot be contemplated without it [*muḥāsaba's*]. The station of trust (*tawakkul*) comprises the stations of entrusting (*tafwīḍ*), seeking aid (*istiʿāna*) and contentment (*riḍā*); its existence cannot be perceived without them. The station of hope (*rajāʾ*) comprises the stations of fear and *irāda*[20]...

The *sāliks*, in relation to each of these stations, are of two types: the righteous (*abrār*) and the intimate (*muqarribs*). The righteous are at the station's lower end and the intimate are at its upper end—this is how all of the levels of faith are. Only Allah can enumerate the differences and superiority of grades of each of the two types.

Their categorization into three—general (*ʿām*), special (*khāṣṣ*) and extremely special (*khāṣṣ khāṣṣ*)—only came into existence by making annihilation (*fanāʾ*) the end of the path; the people who exerted themselves in this know this and we shall soon mention this. The categories of annihilation are praiseworthy and blameworthy, excellent and insignificant. Verily, the

20— Among the Sufis this means preferring the will of the Master over one's will. (IN)

Community[21] (*qawm*) has indicated towards this *inshāʿ* Allah, and their focus is on this. However, regarding that category that has been mentioned, each of the classifiers of the stations will not be free from [mentioning things] arbitrarily and [making] claims that lack congruence.

Indeed, when the slave holds tight to the covenant of Islam and enters it fully, then he has held tight to its outer and inner requirements, and reached spiritual stations and states. By completing each of the faith's covenants and incumbent actions (*wājibs*), he will experience states and attain stations. He will only complete a covenant and incumbent act by experiencing states and attaining stations. Each time he completes a *wājib* he will face another *wājib* after it. Each time he crosses a station he will be faced by another.

At the beginning of his journey, lofty stations and states will appear to him; [at this time] the states of affection (*maḥabba*), contentment (*raḍā*), intimacy (*'uns*) and tranquillity (*ṭumaʿnīna*)—which will not befall the *sālik* at the end of his journey—will be unveiled to him. The *sālik*, at the end of his journey, will be in greater need of things such as insight (*baṣīra*), repentance (*tawba*) and self-examination (*muḥāsaba*), more than the beginner. There is no absolute and incumbent sequence for Sulūk in this.

We have mentioned that indeed repentance (*tawba*), which they have listed at the beginning of the stations, is the *'ārifs'* purpose and the final destination of the *walīs* of Allah. There is no doubt that their need for self-examination at the end is greater than at the beginning.

The best statements regarding these stations is that which is according to the way of those of the earlier times from among

21— An indication to the Sufis.

the Imāms of the Community. This is an absolute speech regarding each station by explaining its reality, effects and the spiritual dangers (*āfāt*) that hinder its acquisition and separates [one] from it and its particulars. The statements of the Imāms of the path (*ṭarīq*) are of this manner. Those who have understood this—like Sahl ibn ʿAbdullah al-Tustarī, Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, Junayd ibn Muḥammad, Abū ʿUthmān al-Nīsābūrī and Yaḥya ibn Muʿādh al-Rāzī, and those who are loftier than those of this category such as Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī, ʿAwn ibn ʿAbdullah, who used to be known as the Physician of the Ummah (*Ḥakīm al-Umma*), and their like—speak regarding the actions of the heart and the spiritual states (*aḥwāl*) in a type of speech that is detailed, comprehensive, clear and general, without categorizing and enumerating the stations according to a fixed number. Indeed, they were greater than all of this, and their concerns were greater and nobler. They were only concerned with acquiring wisdom and *maʿrifa*, cleansing hearts, purifying souls and correcting social conduct. On account of this, their speech was little and in it there were blessings (*baraka*) whereas the speech of those of the latter times is very lengthy and of little blessing.

However, there is a need to address the people of each age according to their terminologies, as they do not have the ability to buckle down to learn Sulūk from the first predecessors and their statements and instructions. If their instructions and states were to appear to them they refuse to acknowledge them and deem them as a general-type of Sulūk and [say] that the elite have another type of Sulūk in the same way that the divergent theologians and the ignorant among them say: "Indeed, the others were [on a] safer [path], but our path is

more knowledgeable." Likewise, those who attribute themselves to jurisprudence say regarding those whose worth they have not understood: "Indeed, they (those whose worth they have not understood) did not free themselves from deriving rules, and fixing principles and rulings that they may become occupied with something else, whereas the people of the latter times freed themselves from this and so they possessed greater knowledge in jurisprudence."

All of these [types of people] are shrouded from understanding the worth of the predecessors, the depth of their knowledge, the lack of affectation in them and their perfect insight. I swear by Allah, the people of the latter times have not surpassed the people of the earlier times in anything other than affectation and being occupied with peripheral matters; whereas the concern of the Community [the people of the earlier times] was in observing the core principles, fixing their rules and strengthening their strong points. Their purpose was to attain lofty pursuits in everything. Hence, those of the latter times have a standing and the Community has a standing, and Allah has surely created everything according to a measure.

2. Ibn al-Qayyim writes in *Madārij al-Sālikīn* (vol. 2, p.307):

Section

Religion consists entirely of good character. Whoever supersedes you in good character has superseded you in religion. Similarly with Taṣawwuf. Al-Kattānī said, "Taṣawwuf is good character. Whoever supersedes you in good character has superseded you in Taṣawwuf..."

It is said: "It is abandoning blameworthy traits (*radhā'il*) and adorning oneself with lofty attributes (*faḍā'il*)." Good manners rest on four principles and it can only be established through these principles: patience, chastity, bravery and justice... The origin and basis of all basely habits comprise four elements: ignorance, oppression, lustful desire and anger...

For indeed, the most difficult thing for human nature is the changing of those habits which the carnal selves (*nufūs*) have become accustomed to. It is nothing but the changing of those habits that the people of difficult spiritual exercises (*riyāḍāt*) and arduous *mujāhadāt* (striving with one's soul) have worked on, and despite this the majority of them have not been successful in changing them. However, the self (*nafs*) has been occupied, on account of the spiritual exercises, from allowing its authority to appear. When the authority of those [basely] habits appears and becomes prominent, then the spiritual exercises will be defeated and dispersed, and the authority of the *nafs* will dominate the domain of [the person's] character...

◈ ◈ ◈

Then, in a delicate discussion about which path is more beneficial to the *sālik*—adorning oneself with virtue or stripping oneself from blameworthy traits—Ḥāfiẓ Ibn al-Qayyim writes:

One day, I asked Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah ﷺ regarding this issue: the stopping of spiritual dangers, and the preoccupying of oneself with cleansing and purifying the path. The summary of what he told me was that: "The soul is like a pit of dirt, each time you clear it, the dirt will reappear and come up.

However, if you can cover it, and cross it and pass it, then do so and do not preoccupy yourself with cleaning it for you will not reach its bottom. Each time you remove something, more will appear." I say: I asked some shaykhs regarding this issue. They told me, "The example of the spiritual dangers of the soul is like snakes and scorpions in the traveller's path. If he begins to look for them on the way and occupies himself with killing them, then he will be interrupted and he will never be able to travel. However, your goal should be travelling, avoiding them and not paying attention to them. If any of them were to hinder your journey, then kill it and continue your journey." Shaykh al-Islam approved of that greatly and praised the person who said it...

He [Shaykh al-Islam al-Hirawī al-Sūfī] said: "The words of those who speak regarding this science are united in saying that Taṣawwuf is good character; all discussions on this subject revolve around one pivot—doing good and refraining from wrong." I say: there are some who have made it three: refraining from wrong, bearing difficulties and creating ease. Some have, as the shaykh has said, made it two: doing good and refraining from wrong. Some have made it one and that is doing good. All are correct.

He [Shaykh al-Islam al-Hirawī] said: "The possibility of attaining that (doing good and refraining from wrong) can only be achieved through three things: knowledge, generosity and patience." Knowledge guides one to those places where good can be done; it differentiates between good and reprehensible acts, and guides one to do good at its appropriate place. Hence, one will not be angry at the time of gentleness, or vice versa.

Nor will one be restrained at the time of spending, or vice versa. Rather, one will know the places of good and evil, their statuses and the appropriate place for all character traits in terms of where one should employ them and where their usage is better.

Generosity encourages one to forgo one's rights and be concerned instead with the rights of others. Generosity is the commander of the armies of good.

Patience protects one in continuing that, and allows one to endure suffering, suppress anger, remove difficulties [from others], not seek revenge and remain on all of the good as mentioned above. It is the biggest aid in acquiring all that is desired from the goodness of this world and the hereafter. Allah Most High says: *"Seek help in patience and prayer; and truly it is hard save for the humble-minded."* (2:45) These are three elements through which Taṣawwuf can be attained.

Taṣawwuf is one of the elements of real wayfaring (Sulūk), and the purification and rectification of the soul to prepare it for its journey to the companionship of the Al-Rafiq al-Aʿlā (The Greater Company) and the company of He Who you love. For indeed a man will be with whom he loves. It is as Simnūn said, "The lovers have taken the glory of this world and the hereafter, for indeed a man will be with he whom he loves. And Allah knows most."

Section

He (Shaykh al-Islam al-Hirawī) says: "The third level is adorning one's manners by purifying them, then rising beyond the 'separation' of adorning one's manners and then adorning one's self [further] by passing the stage of adorning one's manners'."

This level consists of three things. One of them is purifying the manners by completing what has been mentioned in the two levels before. So one should clear them from every speck of dirt, dust and confusion. When you have done so, you will ascend from its separation (*tafriqa*) [from Allah] to connecting (*jamʿiyya*) yourself to Allah. Indeed, [the concept of] adorning one's self with good manners and Taṣawwuf involves rectifying and preparing for the connection. [The concept of not being attached to Allah due to the preoccupation with adorning one's manners] has only been called "separation" (*tafriqa*) because it involves preoccupation with something apart from Him, and Sulūk demands one's complete attention and the preoccupation of one's self to the Cherisher alone from anything apart from Him.

Then he shall rise above all of that, and that is 'passing the stage of adorning one's manners' in such a way that he disappears from all manners and from adorning himself with them. This absence is, according to them, of two levels: one is preoccupation with Allah Most High from everything apart from Him. The second is annihilation (*fanāʾ*) in the uniqueness [of Allah], which they call the divine union (*ḥaḍra al-jamʿ*) and which is the highest objective according to them. It is awarded (*wahbī*) and not earned (*kasbī*). However, the slave, when he persists and is truthful in searching, it is hoped he will be successful in attaining his purpose. Allah knows most.

Section

Good manners with Allah and with the creation rests on two traits which ʿAbdul Qādir al-Jilani has mentioned, "Remain

with the Truth without any creation [coming in between] and with the creation without any carnal desires (*nafs*) [coming in between]."

Ponder how great these two sentences are in spite of their brevity, and how well they gather the principles of Sulūk and every beautiful manner.

The corruption of manners only comes about due to the intervention of the creation between you and Allah Most High and the intervention of the carnal desires between you and His creation. So, when you have separated [yourself] from the creation at the time of your being with Allah Most High, and from the carnal desires at the time of your being with the creation, then you have succeeded in everything that the Community[22] has indicated towards, that which they have embarked on and around which they have hovered. It is Allah from Whom help is sought. It is mentioned that Sufyān al-Thawrī ﷺ said, "The greatest of people are of five types: the *ʿalim* who is abstinent, the jurist who is a Sufi, the wealthy person who is humble, the poor person who is thankful and the nobleman who is Sunni."

3. Ibn al-Qayyim writes in *Madārij al-Sālikīn* (vol. 2, p.366):

Two ambiguous sentences regarding *irāda*[23] have been narrated from Junayd and each requires explanation. The first sentence is as follows: Abū ʿAbdur Raḥmān al-Sulamī narrates from Muḥammad ibn Mukhallad, from Jaʿfar, from Junayd

22— In other words the Sufis ﷺ.

23— Among the Sufis this means preferring the will of the Master over one's will. (IN)

who said, "The true *murīd* is not in need of the *'ulamā'*." He also said, "When Allah wishes good for a *murīd* he places him with the Sufis and prevents him from the company of the Qur'ān reciters (*qurrā'*)."

I say: When the *murīd* is sincere and has corrected the covenant of his sincerity with Allah, then Allah will open his heart—on account of the baraka of the sincerity and good dealings with Allah—to that [knowledge] which spares him from the knowledge which is the outcome of people's ideas and views, and from that knowledge which is surplus and not from the provisions of the grave, and even from the many instructions of the Sufis and their knowledge for which they spent their lives such as understanding the soul, its harms and defects, understanding that which ruins actions and the rules of Sulūk. Indeed, his being sincere and the soundness of his quest mean all of this in effect.

Its example is that of a man who sits in a city and devotes his night and day to understanding the stations of the path, its mountain passes, valleys and trackless desolate regions, and the places where there is water and deserts. On the other hand, passion and true *irāda* encourages another to travel the path and journey in it. His sincerity leaves him not in need of the knowledge of the man who does not travel, allowing him, in his journey, to witness the path with his eyes.

As to the sincerity of one's *irāda* relieving one from the knowledge of what is *halal* and *haram*, the rulings of what has been ordained and forbidden (*'amr wa al-nahī*), understanding the acts of worship, their conditions, their necessary points (*wājibāt*) and what makes them invalid, and the knowledge

of what Allah and His Prophet have ordered (*aḥkām*), both outwardly and inwardly, then Allah has protected he who is less than Junayd let alone the Sayyid al-Tāʿifah and their Imām.[24] The only ones who say such [things] are those who are robbers on the path, and the freethinkers and heretics from among the Sufis who do not view the following of the Prophet ﷺ to be a condition in the path.

It is also the case that Allah opens the heart of the true *murīd*, radiating it with His *nūr* which adds to the *nūr* of knowledge that he already has and with which he understands many issues regarding his religion. He is, therefore, relieved of much of the knowledge of the people, for indeed knowledge is *nūr* and the heart of he who is true is full of the *nūr* of truth and with it is the *nūr* of *īmān*, and *nūr* guides to [other] *nūr*. Junayd informed us of his spiritual state (*ḥāl*) through this saying. This (what Junayd said) is a partial matter and does not concern knowledge on the whole. Rather, the *murīd's* sincerity leaves one not in need of many types of knowledge.

As to knowledge on the whole, the speech of Abū al-Qāsim [Junayd al-Baghdādī] that is established from him is famous and well known, and that is that the *murīd* needs knowledge, that he who has no knowledge will not be successful, that the way of the Community is bound to knowledge and that it is not permitted for anyone to speak regarding the path except with knowledge.

24—Take note—may Allah shed mercy on you—how Imām Ibn al-Qayyim treats these great people. Compare him to those deluded foolish ones who affiliate themselves to knowledge and always attribute to the Sufis that which is not part of them.

We have already mentioned before some of this, such as his saying, "He who is not mindful of the Qur'ān and not written hadith cannot be followed in this matter for our knowledge is bound to the Book and the Sunnah." He also said that the knowledge of the *'ulamā'* whom he has indicated towards "is that which they have understood and derived from the Qur'ān and the Sunnah." And the sincere *murīd,* "is he who reads the Qur'ān and is mindful of the Sunnah. Allah grants him, due to the *baraka* of his sincerity and the *nūr* of his heart, the understanding of His Book and the Sunnah of His Prophet, relieving him from following the understanding of others."

As to Junayd's saying, "When Allah wishes good for a *murīd* he places him with the Sufis and prevents him from the company of the Qur'ān reciters (*qurrā'*)." The *qurrā'* in their terminology are the people of devotion and worship, regardless of whether they recite the Qur'ān or not. The *qārī*[25] according to them is he who indulges in plenty of worship and devotion and has confined himself to outward worship, not the essence of *ma'rifa*, the realities of faith, the essence of love and the actions of the heart. All of their ardour is spent in performing worship; they have no knowledge of what the people of Taṣawwuf, the people of the hearts and the people of *ma'rifa* have. It is because of this that someone said: "Our path can be weakened but not conquered." Their (the Sufis') journey is with the heart and soul, while the journey of those (the *qurrā'*) is only with the outer shell and form. There is also a type of disagreement and discord between them. None of them can remain in the company of the other except with

25— *Qārī* is singular of *qurrā'*. (IN)

some self-restraint and the burdening of one's character with that which it does not like. Their disagreement is of the type that exists between them and the exoteric (*ẓāhirī*) *faqīhs*. The Sufis call them [the *ẓāhirī faqīhs*] *asḥāb al-rusūm* (people of ritual) and those the *qurrā'*. Both groups, according to them, are people of the outward (*ẓāhir*) and not people of *maʿrifa*. The exoteric *faqīhs* have with them the rituals of knowledge and the *qurrā'* have with them the rituals of worship.

Then, they (the Sufis) among themselves are of two types: the Sufis and the *fuqarā'*. They, according to three views, differ with regards to giving the Sufis preference over the *fuqarā'*, or to the contrary or considering both equal.

There is the group that gives preference to the Sufis; among them are many of the people of Iraq and the author of *Al-ʿAwārif* [*Al-Maʿārif*, by Suhrawardī] is of this view. They consider the place where the *faqīr* ends the place where the Sufi begins. There is also the group that gives preference to the *faqīr*; they have made *faqr* (a want for Allah) the essence and outcome of Taṣawwuf. Many of the people of Khurāsān are of this view. The third group say that *faqr* and Taṣawwuf are the same. These are the people of the Levant.

It is not correct to judge between them until the reality of *faqr* and Taṣawwuf becomes clear. Then it would become known whether they are either one reality or two realities, and what is preferred over what is not.

You shall soon see that explained, *inshā' Allah*, in the sections regarding *al-Faqr* and Taṣawwuf when we reach them if Allah wills and grants through His benevolence and *tawfīq*. There is no power or strength except with Allah. From He it is that

help is sought and upon He it is that trust is placed. What He wishes will be and that which He does not will not.

In summary, the stages according to them are three: the stage of *taqwā* which is the stage of worship and devotion; the stage of Taṣawwuf which is the stage of endeavouring to acquire every praiseworthy trait and abandoning every reprehensible trait; and the stage of *faqr* which is the stage of isolation and breaking every relation that comes between the heart and Allah Most High. These are the stages of those who seek the afterlife. Those apart from them are with those who are left behind, seated.

Hence, Abū al-Qāsim Junayd has indicated that when Allah wishes good for the *murīd* who sincerely wants Allah, he places him in the company of the Sufis who rectify his manners, direct him in purifying his soul, removing its reprehensible traits and replacing them with praiseworthy traits, and acquaints him with the stations of the path, its desert areas, the robbers on the path, and its hazardous points.

As to the *qurrā'*, they pound him with such forms of worship such as fasting and prayer; they do not allow him to taste anything from the sweetness of the actions of the hearts and the purification of souls, as that is not their way. It is on account of this that there is a sense of dislike between them and the people of Taṣawwuf as has been mentioned before.

The sincere one with understanding benefits from every opportunity and remains with each group in the best of what they have He does not incline to any group or remain completey aloof from [any group] in such a way that [he considers] that they do not have anything that is true. This is the way of those who are sincere.

4. Ibn al-Qayyim writes in *Madārij al-Sālikīn* (vol. 2, p.371):

He (i.e. Shaykh al-Islam al-Hirawī al-Ṣūfī) said: "*Irāda* is from the principles of this knowledge and from among its great edifices. [*Irāda*] is complying willingly and unwillingly with the demands of *haqīqa*."

What he means is that this knowledge[26] is built on *irāda*, which is its foundation and the place where its structures meet. This knowledge consists of the detailed explanation of the rulings of *irāda*. It is an action of the heart and it is because of this that it is called the science of inward knowledge (*ʿilm al-bāṭin*) just like the science of *fiqh* concerns the detailed explanations of the rulings of the limbs and it is on account of this that they call it the science of outward knowledge (*ʿilm al-ẓāhir*). These are two voluntary actions. The slave also has an involuntary physical action, and the science concerning its detailed explanations and rulings is medicine. These three types of knowledge are responsible for understanding the actions of the soul, the heart, the tongue, the limbs and a person's physical disposition.

The doctor looks at those actions from the perspective of what affects the body in terms of health and sickness, and that which comes as a result of that, etc. The *faqīh* looks at those actions from the angle of them being in agreement with what Sacred Islamic Law has enjoined and forbidden, given permission for and disliked etc. The Sufi looks at all those actions from the perspective of either being a means of joining the person with his objective or breaking him off from it, and of what is a cause of corrupting his heart or setting it right.

26— Taṣawwuf.

5. Ibn al-Qayyim writes in *Madārij al-Sālikīn* (vol. 2, p.438):

From among the stations of *"It is You whom we worship and it is You from whom we seek aid,"* (1:5) there is the station of want (*faqr*). This station, according to the Community,[27] is the most exalted of the stations of the path, the loftiest and highest. In fact, it is the soul of every station, its heart, essence and apex.

This can only be understood by understanding the reality of *faqr*. The meaning that this group[28] intends is more specific than its original meaning, for the word *faqr* has appeared in the Qur'ān in three places—the first is in His Most High's saying: *"(Your charities should be preferably meant) for the needy (fuqarā') who are confined in the way of Allah, unable to travel in the land. An ignorant person takes them as free of need because of their abstinence from begging..."* (2:273); the second is in His Most High's saying: *"The ṣadaqāt (prescribed alms) are (meant) only to be given to the poor (fuqarā') ..."* (9:60); and the third is in His Most High's saying: *"Oh men, you are the ones who need (fuqarā') Allah ..."* (35:15).

The first type are the distinguished (*khawāṣ*) from among the *fuqarā'*; the second are the *fuqarā'* from among the Muslims, both the special and general among them; and the third is of a general *faqr* for all of the people of the earth, the rich and the poor, and those who believe and disbelieve.

Those who are wealthy and able to travel in the path of Allah are in contrast to the *fuqarā'* mentioned in the first verse. In fact, those who do not conceal their poverty due to their

27—This is in reference to the Sufis.

28—The Sufis.

abstinence from begging are in greater contrast than even the second group.

The rich and the people of wealth stand in contrast to the second group. Those who abstain from begging etc. and those unable to travel in the path of Allah etc. are included in the second group. There is none that is opposite the third group except Allah the Generous alone. Everything apart from Him is in need of Him.

What the Community[29] means by *faqr* is something more specific than all of these meanings, and that is the manifestation of servitude (*ʿubudiyya*) and want for Allah Most High in every situation. This meaning is greater than it just being called "want" (*faqr*)—it is the reality of servitude and its essence; it is disassociating the *nafs* from emulating lordship.

Yaḥyā ibn Muʿādh was asked regarding *faqr*. He said, "Its reality is that one remains not in need of anything except Allah, and the way of acquiring it is to leave all means (*asbāb*)." He also defined it saying, "Not relying on means while utilising them." It is as some of the shaykhs said, "It (*faqr*) is a thing that Allah does not place except within he whom He loves, and drives towards he whom He wishes." Ruwayyim was asked regarding *faqr*. He defined it saying, "Letting loose the *nafs* in fulfilling the commands of Allah." Letting loose the *nafs* is only praiseworthy in issues pertaining to religion and matters of fate regarding which it has not been ordered that one withstands them and guards against them.

Abū Ḥafṣ was asked: "What will the *faqīr* offer his Lord?" He replied: "There is nothing that the *faqīr* can offer his Lord

29—This is in reference to the Sufis.

except his *faqr*. The reality of *faqr* and its perfect form is as some of them said when they were asked: When does the *faqīr* deserve the name of *faqr*? They said: When he has nothing of it left. They were asked how that can be and they said: *Idhā kāna lahu falaysa lahu, wa idhā lam yakun lahu fahuwa lahu.*"[30]

This is the best explanation of *faqr* that the Community has indicated towards—that is that one becomes completely for Allah Most High and that nothing from his *nafs*, self and desire remains. So, as long as anything of his *nafs* remains, then his *faqr* will be incomplete. Abū Ḥafṣ explains that by saying, *"Idhā kāna lahu falaysa lahu, wa idhā lam yakun lahu fahuwa lahu."* In other words when he is devoted to his *nafs* then he is not devoted to Allah, and when he is not devoted to his *nafs* then he is devoted to Him.

The reality of *faqr* is that you do not devote yourself to your *nafs*, and that it does not have any part of you in a way that you are Allah's. When you are devoted to your *nafs*, then there is then a sense of ownership and being free of want (*istighnā'*) that is contrary to *faqr*.

The *faqr* towards which they have indicated is not inconsistent with wealth and properties, as the Messengers of Allah and His Prophets were at the peak of *faqr* while being in possession of wealth and property such as Ibrāhīm al-Khalīl ﷺ who was Abu'l-Ḍīfān[31] and had wealth and livestock. Likewise, this was the situation with Sulaymān and Dāwūd ﷺ and so was it with our Prophet ﷺ. He was as Allah Most High said: *"And He found you in need, then made you need-free."* (93:8) They were wealthy in their *faqr* and *faqīrs* with their wealth.

30— The meaning of this follows in the next paragraph (IN)

31— Abu al-Ḍīfān was the *kunya* or teknonym of Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm ﷺ. (IN)

The real *faqr* is always thinking of Allah in every situation, and that the slave witnesses—in his smallest of actions, outwardly and inwardly—a complete want for Allah Most High in every way. *Faqr* is an inherent characteristic of the slave that only renews itself to the slave when he sees and reaches a spiritual state (*hāl*), or else it would be the *haqīqa*. It is as Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah sanctify his soul) said:

For me faqr is always an intrinsic innate quality,
In the same way ghinā is His inherent quality.

It [faqr] has effects, affiliations, consequences and means towards which the Community has made references to, such as some of them saying, "The *faqīr's* ambition does not go beyond his step." Meaning he is a man of his state and time (*ibn ḥālihi wa waqtihi*); his ambition is confined to his time and it does not go beyond it. It is also said the fundamentals of *faqr* are four: knowledge that guides him, piety that restrains him, belief that carries him and *dhikr* that gives him solace.

Al-Shiblī said, "The reality of *faqr* is that one does not have want for anything except Allah." Sahl ibn ʿAbdullah was asked, "When will the *faqīr* be at rest?" He replied, "When he does not see himself in a time that he is not in."[32] Abū Ḥafṣ said, "Perfect that by which the slave turns to Allah—constant want (*iftiqār*) of Allah, adherence to the Sunnah in all actions and seeking of sustenance through *halal* means."

It was said, "From the requisites of *faqr* is that the *faqīr* is devoid of any longing. And if he does, and that is inevitable,

32— In other words he is preoccupied with the demands of that particular time and not with anything beyond. (IN)

then his longing should not go beyond that which suffices him." It was said, "The *faqīr* does not own and is not owned." Better than this is, "[The *faqīr* is] he who owns and the master does not own him." It was said, "He who intends the glory of *faqr* has died a poor man and he who coveted it so he does not busy himself with anything apart from Allah has died wealthy..."

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There is a detailed discussion regarding *faqr* at this point in *Madārij al-Sālikīn*, which can be seen by those who so wish. Imām Ibn al-Qayyim then comments on the texts of Shaykh al-Islam al-Hirawī al-Ṣūfī in which he mentions the levels of *faqr:*

Abū Ismaʿil al-Hirawī writes: "The third level [of *faqr* is]: *iḍṭirār* (to be devoid of will) and falling into solitary separation or being confined in a desert subject to isolation. This is the *faqr* of the Sufis..." [Ibn al-Qayyim said,] it can be understood from his saying, "This is the *faqr* of the Sufis," that Taṣawwuf according to him is greater than *faqr*, as this third level, which to him is the highest level of *faqr*, is from among some of the stations of Sufism.

There is a group that has disputed with them on that and say, "Taṣawwuf is far below this stage. Taṣawwuf is a means to this *faqr*, as Taṣawwuf is all manners and *faqr* is the reality and goal. There is no goal beyond it." The dispute among the Community with regards to this issue has been mentioned before and we have mentioned three views—these two and a

third that each one is not superior over the other, as each of their realities cannot be perfected except by the other. This is the view of the people of the Levant. And Allah knows best.

6. Ibn al-Qayyim has included in *Madārij al-Sālikīn* (vol. 1, p.154) a separate chapter discussing *fanā'* (annihilation) according to the Sufis, and in this he mentions its types and stages, and its praiseworthy and reprehensible aspects and what the middle path is:

As to annihilation (*fanā'*) from seeing anything apart from He, this is a concept that the majority of the latter Sufis have called towards and which they consider the goal, and it is that on which Abū Ismaʿil al-Anṣārī has based his book and made the third stage in each of his chapters.

They do not mean the annihilation of the existence of everything apart from Allah on the exterior, but the obliteration of the self from seeing and feeling everything apart from Allah. Its true nature is the absence of one of them from everything apart from what he is witnessing, rather also his absence from seeing himself and his being. This is because he becomes absent from his worship on account of He who is worshiped, absent from his *dhikr* on account of He who he is remembering, absent from his love on account of his beloved, and absent from seeing himself on account of He who is being seen.

At times, a spiritual state such as this is called intoxication (*sukr*), annihilation (*iṣṭilām*), obliteration (*maḥw*) and being in the state of union (*jamʿ*). They sometimes differentiate between the meanings of these terms and, at times, the prevalent meaning is the seeing of the heart of its Beloved and

the One it is remembering until he disappears into Him and becomes annihilated in Him and thinks he is in union with Him and that he has joined Him, rather he thinks he is He. This is similar to the story in which a man saw his beloved throw herself into water and so the lover threw himself behind her. The beloved said, "What made you throw yourself into the water?" The lover replied, "I lost myself in you and thought surely you were I."

When his sense returns, he understands he was mistaken in that and that the realities are distinguished in themselves. Hence, the Cherisher (*Rabb*) is the Cherisher, the slave is the slave, and the Creator is separate from the creation, there is nothing from Himself in His creation, and nothing in Him from His creation.

However, at the time of *sukr, maḥw*, iṣṭilām, *fanā'* and *jam'* t his difference becomes absent, and at this time, those involved may say such things as have been narrated from Abū Yazid who said, "Glory be to myself," or, "There is nothing in this *jubba* except Allah." Speech such as this would render the speaker a disbeliever (*kāfir*) if his mind were with him.

However, on account of the absence of the faculty of differentiating and feeling, he is not held blameworthy.

Some of this *fanā'* is praised, some of it is criticized and some of it is excused. That which is praised is his annihilation from loving anything apart from Allah, and from fearing and having hope in anything apart from He, and having trust in Him, seeking aid from Him and turning to Him in such a way that the *dīn* of the slave, outwardly and inwardly, is for Allah in its entirety.

As to the lack of feeling and knowledge that the person in this state cannot distinguish between himself and others, and between the Cherisher and the slave even though his belief is that there is a difference, and nor between his seeing and that which he has witnessed, rather he does not see what is the other, then this is not praiseworthy, or a quality of perfection, or something that is desired or that which has been commanded. Rather, the final outcome of such a person is to be excused—on account of his inability and weakness of heart and mind—from distinguishing and differentiating, from treating every person of rank according to their rank in line with the requisites of knowledge and wisdom, from seeing realities according to how they are, from differentiating between what is eternal (*qadīm*) and temporary, from acts of worship and the one being worshipped—something that would allow him to treat acts of worship according to their rank, witness their levels, give each stage its due in worship and see himself perform this.

Indeed, the slave seeing himself in servitude is in itself a more perfect form of servitude than him being absent from seeing that, for the action of servitude in a situation in which the slave is absent from seeing it and from himself is like the action of a drunkard and sleeping person. The action of servitude in the state when he is wide-awake and aware has its own details. His doing so like this is a more complete, perfect and stronger form of servitude.

This situation is also not necessarily that of all *sāliks* but it comes to some of them. Those who have been afflicted include Abū Yazīd and others like him. There are some who are not afflicted by it. Their situation is more perfect and strong. Indeed,

the Companions ﷺ are the leaders of the knowers of Allah (*ʿārifs*), the Imāms of those who have reached [Allah] and are close [to Him], and the exemplars of the *sāliks*. There was none among them who was afflicted by this in spite of the strength of their intention (*irāda*), their passing of so many stages, and their seeing that which others did not see. They did not even have a whiff of its smell and nor did it pass their hearts. If this *fanāʾ* was perfect then they were more deserving of it and would have been the people of it, and they would have had from it that which others have not.

This was also not the case with our Prophet ﷺ, and nor was his state. It is on account of this that on the night of Miʿrāj when he was taken and he saw that which he saw from that which Allah showed him from His great signs, this state did not come to him. Rather, he was as Allah Most High has described him in the verse, *"The eye neither went wrong, nor did exceed the limit. He has indeed seen a part of the biggest signs of your Lord."* (53:17-18) He also said, *"And We did not make the vision We showed to you, but a test for the people."* (17:60) Ibn ʿAbbās ﷺ said, "This is the vision that He showed the Messenger of Allah ﷺ on the night he was taken..." In spite of this, he came amongst them in the morn and his condition did not change, nor was he left senseless or unconscious, he informed them of the details of what he saw, he was not annihilated from his self and nor from seeing it. It is because of this that his situation was more perfect than Mūsā ibn ʿImrān ﷺ when he fell senseless when his Cherisher revealed Himself to the mountain, turning it into rubble.

Section:

There are two reasons for this *fanā'*: one is the strength of the inspirations (*wārid*) and weakness of the one receiving, and this is not criticism of the person [who is experiencing this]; the second is deficiencies in knowledge and [the faculty] of differentiating, and this is criticism of the person [involved]. He (Imām Abū Ismāʿīl) saw this as an obstacle from the obstacles of the path. This is blameworthy and feared.

It is because of this that the Community[33] has greatly advised the pursuit of knowledge; warned against *Sulūk* without knowledge; ordered the leaving of he who abandons knowledge and turns away from it, and not to take from such a person because they knew the consequences of the affairs of such a person and the terrible outcome of their journey. He who generally turns heretic from among the *sāliks* becomes so because of his turning away from the demands of knowledge while journeying along the path of tasting spiritual bliss (*dhawq*) and ecstasy (*wajd*), which takes him on to a path of many ways. This is a *fitna*, a *fitna* that is great. It is Allah Who grants success.

7. Ibn al-Qayyim differs in *Madārij al-Sālikīn* (vol. 1, p.198) with Shaykh al-Islam al-Hirawī al-Ṣūfi when he mentions in *Manāzil al-Sā'irīn*, "From the realities of *tawba* is seeking the apology of the creation." Having critiqued him, Hāfiẓ Ibn al-Qayyim writes:

This lapse from the Shaykh al-Islam does not necessitate the invalidation of his good qualities and having a poor opinion

33— This is in reference to the Sufis.

of him; his standing in knowledge, leadership, *maʿrifa* and pre-eminence in the way of *Sulūk* is something that is not unknown. [It is with regards to] each person that some of his speech is taken and some of it left, save with regards to he who is infallible ﷺ. Perfect is he whose mistakes are counted; and this is surely the case in the likes of this difficult situation and gruelling battleground in which feet slip and minds go astray, and in which the *sāliks* divide into different paths and then they, except a few of them, arrive in the valleys of perdition. How can it not be? It is the sea in which the ship of those riding it moves among mountain-like waves and the battle in which the valor of the brave shines due to their being there, and in which the minds of intelligent men become perplexed. The creation reaches its coast, seeking to navigate it.

Among them there is he who stands with his head bowed and stunned, unable to cast a look at the sea and move his feet from his place. His heart is full of the greatness of that which he has seen and so he says, "Standing on the coast is safer. He who places himself in danger is not wise." Then there is he who turns back when he hears its rage and the sound of its waves; he is unable to cast a glance at it. There is also he who throws himself into its depth; a wave takes him down and another raises him.

All of these three are in danger because the one standing on the coast is exposed to water reaching below his feet; the one who runs, even if he makes every effort, has no final destiny except towards it; and he who is daring is looking at those who have drowned every hour before his eyes. Only the fourth type of person will be saved and they are those who await the

arrival of the Vessel of Command.[34] When it draws near to them, the captain will call out, *"Embark it. With the name of Allah it sails and anchors."* (11:41) This is in reality the Ark of Sayyidunā Nūh ﷺ and the vessels of those prophets who came after him. Whoever climbs aboard them will be saved and whoever remains behind will drown.

They will climb on board the Vessel of Command by divine fate; it will take them in the movements of its waves by surrendering to He who has the right of disposition in the seas. It will only be like a light nap until it is said to the earth and skies, *"O earth, suck in your water, and O heaven, stop. And water subsided, and the matter was over. It (the Ark) came to rest on the Judi."* (11:44) In other words that is the Dār al-Qarār (the Permanent Abode).

Those who remained behind from the ship, like the people of Sayyidunā Nūh ﷺ, drowned and were destroyed. It was called out against them at the tops of the worlds, *"and it was said, 'Away with the wrongdoers,'"* (11:44) and, *"We did not do injustice to them, rather, they themselves were the unjust."* (43:76) Then it will be announced in a sufficient and powerful language, while verifying His *tawḥīd* and establishing His writ—and He is the most just: *"Say, 'Then, Allah's is the conclusive proof. So, had He willed, He would have brought all of you on the right path.'"* (6:149)

Section:

The task of the one riding this sea in the Vessel of Command is to clash with the waves of fate and to oppose one with another,

34— In otherwords fulfilling the commands of Allah. (IN)

otherwise he will perish. He should repel fate with fate and this is the journeying of those with strong wills from among the *ʿārifs*. This is the meaning of the saying of the shaykh, the *ʿārif*, the exemplar ʿAbdul Qādir al-Jīlānī, "When the people reach a point of fate and destiny, they withhold, except me. A window opens up to me in it and I fight the destinies of truth with truth for the truth. The (true) man is he who fights destiny, not he who surrenders to it."

When the interests of people in their livelihood only materialize by pushing back destinies, one with another, then what is the condition when it comes to matters of the hereafter? Allah Most High has ordered that an evil deed, which is from one's destiny, should be fought back with a good deed, which is also from one's destiny. Likewise, hunger is from one's destiny and He has ordered that one repels it by eating which is also from one's destiny.

If a person were to surrender to the destiny of hunger—in spite of his ability to repel it by eating—until he died, then he has died sinful. This is the same with cold, heat and thirst. All of these are his destinies and He has ordered that one repels them according to that which opposes them. The one who is repelling, the repelled and the repelling itself are his destiny.

The Prophet ﷺ has eloquently described this meaning when the Companions asked, "O Messenger of Allah, do you think that the medicine that we use, the incantations that we recite and the *taqwā* that we adopt repels what Allah has destined even a bit?" He replied, "That is from the destiny of Allah." In another hadith he said, "Surely, supplications and difficulties wrestle with each other between the sky and the earth."

When the disbelieving enemy knocks at the cities of Islām, then they knock due to what Allah has destined. Is it permissible for the Muslims to surrender to fate and abandon repelling them in appropriate ways? [Rather], it is jihād with which they repel the fate of Allah according to one's ability.

It is the same with a sin; when it is destined for you and you do it due to fate then repel its consequences with sincere repentance and that is from fate.

8. Ibn al-Qayyim writes in *Madārij al-Sālikīn* (vol. 2, p.39), and this is after he has opposed some of the views of Shaykh al-Islam al-Hirawī:

That is the reason for his words and the most beautiful of meanings. It is said that this and other words of ecstasy (*shaṭaḥāt*)[35]—the forgiveness of which is hoped through an abundance of good deeds, and which one is deeply drawn into due to perfect truthfulness (*ṣidq*), correct dealing, utmost sincerity and pure monotheism, and no human after the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is guaranteed fallibility—has forced two groups of people into *fitna*:

The first group has been blinded from the goodness of this group, the gracefulness of their souls and the truthfulness of their dealings on account of these words of ecstasy. They

35— *Ṣhaṭaḥāt* is the plural of *shaṭḥ* and are words that are not in line with the Sharīʿa, spoken by some Sufis while experiencing spiritual states. Ḥakīm al-Ummah Mawlānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī writes in *Taʿlīm al-Dīn* that "*shaṭḥ* are those words spoken without choice and are contrary to outward rules due to being overwhelmed by *wārids* (divine inspirations). Such a person is not sinful but should not be followed". (IN)

consider them (the Sufis) invalid on account of these *shaṭaḥāt*; they severely reject them and view them poorly in an absolute fashion. This is enmity and excessiveness.

If everyone who commits a mistake or errs were to be abandoned indiscriminately, and all of his good points were to be considered invalid, then all knowledge, crafts and wisdoms would be ruined and those who are distinguished for their knowledge in these matters would be without work.

The second group has been blinded by the goodness of the Community, the purity of their hearts, the correctness of their intentions and their good dealings from seeing the defects of their *shaṭaḥāt* and their shortcomings; they have praised the *shaṭaḥāt* and give them their approval. These people have also exceeded the limit and are extreme.

The third group are the people of justice and equity who give every man their due and treat people according to their ranks. They do not adjudicate he who is healthy as being ill and poorly, nor consider healthy he who is ill and poorly. They, rather, accept that which should be accepted and refute that which should be refuted.

These words of ecstasy and their like have been warned against by the leaders of the Community. They have criticised their outcome and expressed themselves as being free from them, so much so that Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī has mentioned in his book that Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī was seen after his death and was asked, "What did Allah do with you?" He replied, "He forgave me and there was nothing more harmful to me than the allusions (*ishāra*) of the Community."

Abu'l-Qāsim said, I heard Abū Saʿīd al-Shaḥḥām say, "I saw Abū Sahl al-Ṣaʿlūkī in a dream and so I [started to] ask him, 'O shaykh…' He said, 'Leave the honorification.' So I said, 'And what about those spiritual states (*ḥāl*)?' He replied, 'They were of no use.' I asked, 'What did Allah do with you?' He said, 'He forgave me because of some issues of *fiqh* that some elderly ladies would ask.'"

Al-Jarīrī said that he saw Junayd after his demise in a dream and so he asked, "How are you O Abu'l-Qāsim?" He replied, "Those allusions (*isḥāra*) perished and those texts disappeared. The only thing that benefited us were those *tasbīḥāt* that we used to recite in the mornings."

Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī said, "Subtle points mentioned by the Community are presented to me, but I only accept them in light of two just witnesses—the Book and the Sunnah." Junayd said, "Our way is bound by the Book and the Sunnah. He who does not recite the Qur'ān and write hadith will not be followed in our way." There are these and many other sayings which have been narrated from them, may Allah be pleased with them.

9. Ibn al-Qayyim writes in *Madārij al-Sālikīn* (vol. 2, p.52):

May Allah thank the Shaykh al-Islam[36] for his efforts, raise his status, reward him in the best way and gather us with him

36— That is Shaykh al-Islam Abū Ismāʿīl ʿAbd Allah ibn Muḥammad al-Anṣār al-Hirawī al-Ṣūfī.

at the place of His generosity. If his *murīd*[37] were to find an opportunity and occasion to raise an objection against him and object to his words, then he would not. How could he? Allah has benefited him through his speech, he has sat before him like a student in front of his teacher, and he was the one in whose hands Allah bestowed many good things both whilst awake and asleep.

This is the utmost effort of a destitute man at this place. He who has the superiority of knowledge should strive earnestly with it, or offer an excuse and not hasten to object. How much was the difference between the hoopoe and the Prophet of Allah Sulaymān who told him, *"I have discovered what you did not."* (27:22) The Shaykh al-Islam is not more knowledgeable than the Prophet of Allah and the one who raises objections against him is no more ignorant than the hoopoe. It is from Allah that help is sought and He is the most knowledgeable.

10. Ibn al-Qayyim writes in *Madārij al-Sālikīn* (vol. 3, p.330):

Let it be known that the language of the Community[38] includes metaphors, the usage of general words (*ʿām*) while intending specific meanings (*khāṣṣ*), and the usage of words while intending their alluded meanings (*ishāra*)—not their apparent meaning—something that does not exist in the nomenclature of other groups. It is because of this that they say, "We are

37— In otherwords Imām Ibn al-Qayyim himself.
38— The Sufis.

the people of *ishāra* and not the people of actual text," and, "the *ishāra* are for us and the texts are for others."

At times they use a phrase used by a heretic and intend a meaning in which there is no corruption. This becomes a means of *fitna* for two groups: the group that attributes the outward meaning of texts to them and then considers them to be innovators and astray; and the group that looks at what they aim and intend, and approves those texts and considers correct those alluded meanings. The seeker of truth accepts it from whoever has it and rejects that which opposes it regardless of who it is.

11. Ibn al-Qayyim writes in *Madārij al-Sālikīn* (vol. 3, p.151):

Be completely aware of ambiguous, obscure words that are in the nomenclature of the Community. They are indeed the root of difficulties, and the source of both the *ṣiddīq* and the heretic. When a person who is weak in recognizing and knowing Allah Most High hears the words *ittiṣāl* (union), *infiṣāl* (separation), *musāmara* (conversing), *mukālama* (communion), and that nothing is in existence in reality except Allah, and that the existence of the worlds are thoughts and illusions like a shadow which exists on account of another, then he hears that which fills the ears with *ḥulul* (incarnationism), *ittiḥād* (unification) and *shaṭaḥāt* (words of ecstasy).

When the *ʿārifs*, on the other hand, use these words and others like them, they intend the correct inherent meaning. But some err in understanding what they mean and attribute heresy and *kufr* to them.

12. Ibn al-Qayyim establishes a specific section in *Madārij al-Sālikīn* (vol.1, p.430) to explain the contemplations (*mashāhid*) of people and has mentioned thirteen *mashāhid*—four belonging to those who are astray and the rest for those who are steadfast. He also mentions regarding this section that "it is one of the most important sections of this book and greatly beneficial to all. It is worthy of great praise." He also said that "it is possible you will not come across this in another book." At the end of the 12th contemplation he writes:

When he is endowed with knowledge in this *mashhad* and it becomes firm in his heart, and he enjoys it, tastes it and its sweetness, then he ascends from there to the thirteenth contemplation, which is the objective that the *sāliks* strive toward, the travellers intend and that which those who toil eye. It is the *mashhad* of servitude (*ʿubūdiyya*), love and eagerness to meet Him, rejoice in Him, and be happy and joyful with him. His [the *sālik's*] eye will become cool, his heart will take solace in Him (Allah Most High) and his limbs will be in a state of rest towards Him. His remembrance will take possession over the tongue of His lover and his heart. Thoughts of love shall take the place of thoughts of disobedience, intentions of gaining His proximity and the proximity of deeds that please Him shall take the place of intentions to disobey and displease Him. The movement of tongues and limbs in His obedience will take the place of actions of disobedience.

His heart shall be filled with His love, his tongue shall be devoted with His remembrance and limbs will be guided to His obedience. Surely, this particular [type of] self-defeat has a bewildering effect in love that cannot be described.

It has been narrated from some *ʿārifs* that they said, "I tried to access Allah through all of the doors of obedience but whichever door I tried to enter from I would see a crowd of people and I could not enter until I came to the door of meekness (*dhill*) and showing a want (*iftiqār*), which was the nearest and widest door to Him and did not have any crowds and hindrances. I had only placed my foot at its threshold when all of a sudden He Most High took me by the hand and brought me in."

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah ﷺ used to say, "Whoever intends eternal happiness, then let him hold tight to the threshold of servitude."

Some *ʿārifs* said, "There is no shorter path to Allah than servitude and no veil more dense than making false claims; actions (*ʿamal*) and striving hard will not benefit in the presence of pretension and pride; and showing a want to Allah and meekness is not harmed by valor." This is all after the compulsory (*farḍ*) actions are carried out.

The point is, this meekness and special self-defeat enters him upon Allah and throws him on to the path of love from which a door opens for him which would not open for him from a different route. Even though the paths of all actions and forms of obedience open for the slave doors of His love, that door which opens to him through meekness, selflessness, showing a want for Allah (*iftiqār*), contempt for the carnal self and viewing it as weak, helpless, faulty and defective in a way that he sees it as something that is not sought after, but powerless, neglected, sinful and wrong, is of a different type and of a different opening.

The *sālik* who is on this path is strange among people—they are in one *wādī* and he is in another. It is also called the Way of the Birds (*ṭarīq al-ṭayr*); he who is asleep in his bed will supersede those who endeavour hard. When he awakes in the morning, he will have traversed the path and passed those who were mounted. While he is speaking to you, he will have outstripped fast horses and those who strive hard are left behind. It is from Allah that help is sought and He is the best of those who forgive.

13. Ibn al-Qayyim writes in *Madārij al-Sālikīn* (vol.2, p.464):

Section:

From among the stations of, *"It is You whom we worship and it is You from whom we seek aid,"* (1:4) there is the station of knowledge (*'ilm*). If this station does not accompany the *sālik* from the first step that he places in the path until the last, then his *Sulūk* will be on another path; the path of connecting to Allah (*wuṣūl*) is cut off from him, the paths of guidance are blocked for him, and the doors of success are closed to him. This is the consensus of the *'ārif* shaykhs. Only the robbers among them and Iblīs' delegates and aides forbid [from adhering and seeking] knowledge.

The master of the Sufis (*Sayyid al-Ṭā'ifa*) and their shaykh Junayd ibn Muḥammad ﷺ said, "All of the paths are closed to the creation, save for he who follows in the steps of the Prophet ﷺ." He also said, "He who does not safeguard the Qur'ān and write hadith shall not be followed in this matter because our knowledge is bound to the Book and the Sunnah." He also

said, "This way of ours is bound to the principles of the Book and the Sunnah."

Abū Ḥafṣ ﷺ said, "He who does not weigh his actions and spiritual states (*aḥwāl*) at all times by the Book and the Sunnah, and does not consider with suspicion his thoughts, then he will not be counted in the register of men." Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī ﷺ said, "Sometimes a point among the many subtle points mentioned by the Community penetrate my heart for a number of days, but I only accept them in light of two just witnesses—the Book and the Sunnah." Sahl ibn ʿAbdullah ﷺ said, "Every action that the slave does without guidance, regardless of whether it is an act of piety or sin, is feeding the carnal self, and every action that the slave performs with guidance is punishing the carnal self."

Sarrī said, "Taṣawwuf is the name of three meanings: the light of his *maʿrifa* should not extinguish the light of his fear in Allah; he should not speak regarding the inner aspect of a knowledge that the outward aspects (*ẓāhir*) of the Book are contradicted by; and miracles (*karāmāt*) should not bring him to commit those actions that Allah has forbidden."

Abū Yazīd said, "I carried out *mujāhada* (struggling with the inner self) for thirty years and I found nothing more difficult than knowledge and following it. If it weren't for the differences (*ikhtilāf*) of the *ʿulamāʿ*, then I would have been left behind. The differences of the scholars are a mercy except in matters of pure monotheism (*tawḥīd*)." He once said to his servant, "Let us go to meet that man who is famous for his piety." When they entered upon him in the mosque, the man cleared his throat and spat in the direction of the Qibla. Abū Yazīd returned

and did not make *salām* with him. He said, "He is not trusted in following one etiquette from the many etiquettes of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, so how can he be trusted in that which he claims?" He also said, "I had a desire to ask Allah Most High that he protects me from the burden of women. Then I said to myself, 'How can it be permissible for me to ask Allah for this when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not ask for this?' So I didn't ask for it. Then Allah protected me from the burden of women until I didn't care if a woman or a wall confronted me." He also said, "If you see a man who has been bestowed with such miracles that he flies, then do not be deceived by him until you see how he is in bidding good and preventing evil, adhering to the limits and fulfilling the requirements of Sharī'a."

Aḥmad ibn Abu'l-Ḥuwārī ﷺ said, "Whoever carries out an action without following the Sunnah, then his action is futile."

Abū 'Uthmān al-Nīsābūrī ﷺ said, "Association with Allah should be carried out with excellent etiquettes (*ḥusn al-adab*) and uninterrupted reverence and thought; association with the Prophet ﷺ should be carried out by following his Sunnah and adhering to the exoteric aspects of knowledge; association with the *walīs* of Allah should be carried out with respect and service; association with family should be carried out with good manners (*husn al-khalq*); association with friends should be with perpetual joy as long as there is no sin; and association with the ignorant (*juhhāl*) should be with *du'ā'* for mercy for them." Others have added to this, "Association with the two angels, [that transcribe words and deeds, should be carried out by being] kind to them, respecting them and dictating to them that for which they will praise you; association with the carnal

self (*nafs*) is by opposing it; and association with Satan is by being his enemy."

Abū ʿUthmān also said, "Whoever appoints the Sunnah as commander over himself in words and action will speak with wisdom, and whoever appoints his desires as commander over himself in words and action will speak of innovation (*bidʿa*). Allah Most High says, *'If you obey him, then you shall be guided.'*" (54:24)

Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Nūrī said, "Do not venture near he whom you see claiming to be associated with Allah Most High while leaving the limits of Sharʿī knowledge."

Muḥammad ibn al-Faḍl al-Bamjī, who was from among the major shaykhs of the Community, said, "The passing of Islam will be on account of four: they will not practice what they know, they shall practice that which they do not know, they shall not teach that which they do, and they shall prevent people from learning and teaching."

ʿAmr ibn ʿUthmān al-Makkī said, "Knowledge is the commander, fear is the driver, and the carnal self is bound between the two, defiant, deceptive and sly. Beware of it, keep it in check with the management of knowledge and drive it with the intimidation of fear. For you shall be what you desire."

Abū Saʿīd al-Kharrāz said, "Every inner form (*bāṭin*) which is opposed by the outward form (*ẓāhir*) is false."

Ibn ʿAṭāʾ said, "Whoever makes the etiquettes of the Sunnah incumbent upon himself, Allah will enlighten his heart with the light of *maʿrifa*. There is no station (*maqām*) nobler than the station of following the beloved (*ḥabīb*) ﷺ in what he ordered, did and in his manners." He also said, "Everything

that you ask about, seek it in the security of knowledge; if you don't find it [there], then in the field of wisdom; if you don't find it [there], then weigh it with monotheism (*tawḥīd*); and if you don't find it in these three places, then strike the face of Satan with it.

The fingers of [Shaykh] al-Ḥammāl were pushed in front of a beast, which began sniffing him but did not harm him. When he was saved, he was asked, 'What was in your heart when the beast sniffed you?' He said, 'I was thinking of the differences of the *'ulamā'* regarding the saliva of wild animals.'"

Abū Ḥamzah al-Baghdādī[39] said, "He who knows the right path, his journey will be easy. The only guide in the path to Allah is following the Prophet ﷺ in his states, speech and actions. Shaykh Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Mūsā al-Wāsiṭī went to the Jāmi' Mosque on the day of Friday when the strap of his sandal broke. A pharmacist repaired it and he said, 'Do you know why the strap of my sandal broke?' He replied he did not know, at which he said, 'It's because I didn't perform *ghusl* for the Friday prayers.' The pharmacist said, 'There's a bath here that you can enter.' He said yes, entered it and then performed *ghusl*."

Abū Isḥāq al-Raqqī, who was one of the contemporaries of Junayd, said, "The sign of Allah's love is giving preference to his obedience and following His Prophet ﷺ."

Abū Ya'qūb al-Nahrajūrī said, "The best of states (*aḥwāl*) are those which go hand in hand with knowledge."

Abū al-Qāsim al-Naṣr Ābādhī—the shaykh of Khurāsān in his time—said, "The core of Taṣawwuf is clinging to the Book

39— He was from the senior shaykhs who Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal would ask in matters of *Fiqh* saying, "What do you say, Oh Sufi?"

and the Sunnah, abandoning desires and *biḍʿa*, honoring the miracles of the shaykhs, making excuses for people, continuing with one's litanies (*awrād*), and abandoning the use of dispensations (*rukhṣa*) and inappropriate explanations (*taʿwīlāt*)."

Abū Bakr al-Ṭamasṭānī—one of the senior shaykhs of the group—said, "The path is clear, and the Book and the Sunnah are with us. The superiority of the Companions is known due to their superseding in Hijrah and their companionships (*suḥba*). He who remains with the Book and the Sunnah withdraws from his carnal self and people, and migrates with his heart to Allah, he is a truthful and correct individual."

Abū ʿAmr ibn Nujayd said, "Each spiritual state (*ḥāl*) that is not the outcome of knowledge, its harm on the person experiencing is more than its benefit." He also said, "Taṣawwuf is remaining patient in the face of those actions that have been ordained and forbidden."

Some of the senior early shaykhs used to say, "Oh community of Sūfīs, do not separate the black from the white[40] or else you will perish."

14. Ibn al-Qayyim writes in *Madārij al-Sālikīn* (vol.2, p.483):

From the stations of *"it is You Whom we worship and it is You from Whom we seek aid"* (1:4) there is the station of *firāsa* (insight/acumen). Allah Most High said, *"Indeed, in this are signs for the mutawassimīn."* (15:75) Mujāhid said the *mutawassimīn* are

40— Perhaps the word white is a metaphor for paper and black a metaphor for the ink by which sacred knowledge is written. The advice to the Sufis is that they should adhere to knowledge. (IN)

those who have visual acuity (or *firāsa*. Ibn ʿAbbās ﷺ said they are those who watch. Qatāda said they are those who learn a lesson (*ʿibra*), and Muqātil said they are those who reflect (*mutafakkirīn*).

There is no incompatibility among these views, for indeed the one who watches when he sees the ruins of the buildings of those who falsified [the message], their homes and that which was their outcome, then he inherits insight, learns a lesson and reflects...

Firāsa is of three types: *Īmānīyya*, which is being spoken about at this point. Its cause is the light (*nūr*) that Allah casts in the heart of His slave with which he differentiates between truth and falsehood, between that which is a spiritual state (*ḥāl*) and that which is not, and between he who is truthful and he who is not. Its reality is that it is a thought (*khāṭir*) that rushes to the heart and negates that which opposes it. It leaps at the heart like a lion at its prey (*farīsa*). However, [in its linguistic form] *farīsa* is on the pattern of *faʿīla*, which is in the meaning of an object (*mafʿūla*) whereas *firāsa* is in the pattern of words such as *wilāya* (authority), *imāra* (command) and *siyāsa* (administration). This *firāsa* is according to the strength of faith. He who is of strong faith will have sharper *firāsa*.

Abū Saʿīd al-Kharrāz said, "He who sees with the light (*nūr*) of *firāsa*, sees with the light of the Truth. His knowledge is the Truth without any neglect and heedlessness. Rather, true judgment flows from the tongue of His slave." Al-Wāsiṭī said, "*Firāsa* are beams of lights that glimmer in hearts and give the ability to know secrets which are hidden from one to another so much that one witnesses things from where the Truth sees it,

and he speaks about the innermost conscience of the creation." Al-Dārānī said, "*Firāsa* is the unravelling of the self and seeing of the unseen, it is from the stations of īmān.

Some were asked regarding *firāsa* and they said, 'Souls move around in the *malakūt* (heavenly abode) and have the honour of coming across the unseen. They speak regarding the secrets of the creation as they have seen and not as they think or expect.'"

ʿAmr ibn Nujayd said, Shāh al-Kirmānī had sharp *firāsa* and was never wrong. He used to say, "Whoever lowers his gaze from that which is prohibited, restrains himself from desires, inculcates his interior with contemplation (*murāqaba*) and his exterior with adherence to the Sunnah, and accustoms himself to eating *halal*, then his *firāsa* will never be wrong."

Abū Jaʿfar al-Ḥaddād said, "*Firāsa* is the first thought (*khāṭir*) [that comes] without anything that contradicts (*muʿāriḍ*); if something of its type opposes it, then it is a *khāṭir* and the self speaking."

Abū Ḥafṣ al-Nīsābūrī said, "It is not the right of anyone to claim to have *firāsa*. However, fear the *firāsa* of others for the Prophet ﷺ said, 'Fear the *firāsa* of a believer, for indeed he sees with the light of Allah.' He did not say, 'Seek *firāsa*.' How can that man who is at a place where *firāsa* should be avoided be correct in his claim of possessing *firāsa*?"

Aḥmad ibn ʿAsim al-Anṭākī said, "When you sit with the people of sincerity, then sit sincerely with them for they spy on hearts, they enter your hearts and take from where you cannot imagine."

Junayd was one day speaking to the people when an unknown Christian youth stood up and said, "Oh shaykh, what is

the meaning of the hadith of the Prophet ﷺ, 'Fear the *firāsa* of a believer, for indeed he sees with the light of Allah.'" Junayd bowed his head in silence and then raised it towards that youth and said, "Accept Islam, the time for your Islam has come." The youth then accepted Islam.

It is mentioned in some old books, "Indeed, the *firāsa* of a *ṣiddīq* is never wrong." Ibn Masʿud said, "The people with the sharpest *firāsa* are three: the king of Egypt who purchased Yūsuf when he said to his wife, *'Make his stay comfortable, maybe he will benefit us or we shall adopt him as a son'* (12:21); the daughter of Shuʿayb when she said to her father regarding Mūsā, *'Hire him'* (28:26); and Abū Bakr when he appointed ʿUmar ﷺ his successor."

In another narration there is the wife of Firʿawn when she said, *"A comfort of the eye for me and for you. Kill him not, perhaps he may be of benefit to us, or we may adopt him as a son."* (28:29)

Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq ﷺ is considered to be the one with the greatest *firāsa* in the Ummah and after him was ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ﷺ. Incidents of ʿUmar's *firāsa* are well known. He would only say regarding something, "I think this is so," and it would be as he said. It suffices regarding his *firāsa* that the Almighty agreed with him at many well-known times. Once Sawād ibn Qārib, who Sayyidunā ʿUmar did not know, passed by him, at which ʿUmar said, "Either I am mistaken or this man is a soothsayer or used to know fortunetelling in the Days of Ignorance." When Sawād sat before ʿUmar, he told him the same, at which Sawād said, "Glory to Allah. O Commander of the Faithful, you have never received any of the people who sit by you, the way you received me." ʿUmar ﷺ said, "That

which we were on in the Days of Ignorance is worse than this. Nevertheless, tell me about that which I ask you." He replied, "You speak the truth, O Commander of the Faithful. I was a soothsayer in the Days of Ignorance." He then mentioned his story.

Likewise, ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān ﷺ was a man of true *firāsa*. Anas ibn Mālik ﷺ said, "I entered on ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān ﷺ and I had seen a woman on the way whose beauty I had noticed. ʿUthmān ﷺ said, 'One of you visits me and the effect of *zinā* can be seen in his eyes.' So I said, is there revelation (*waḥy*) after the Messenger of Allah ﷺ? He said, 'Rather, there is insight, proof and true *firāsa*.'"

The *firāsa* of the Companions ﷺ was the truest. The root of this type of *firāsa* is obtained from that life and light that Allah Most High bestows on whom he wishes from among His slaves. The heart comes alive and is enlightened; its *firāsa* will hardly be wrong. Allah says, *"Is he who was dead and We gave him life and set for him a light with which he may walk among people like he who is in darkness from which he can never come out?"* (6:122) The person was dead on account of disbelief and ignorance, and then Allah gave him life through faith and knowledge, he made the Qurʾān and īmān light for him with which to guide him among people to the straight path and out from darkness...

There are two causes of *firāsa*: One is the excellence of the mind of the person with *firāsa*, and the sharpness of his heart and good intelligence. The second is the appearance of signs and indications on the object of the *firāsa*. When both causes come together, then that person's *firāsa* will seldom be wrong. When both are not present, then his *firāsa* will seldom be

correct. When one of the two is strong and the other weak, then his *firāsa* will be in between.

Iyās ibn Muʿāwiya was one of those who had great *firāsa*. Incidents regarding him are famous, as was the case with Imām al-Shāfiʿī regarding whom it is said that he has writings on this issue.

I have seen some wondrous things from the *firāsa* of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah ﷺ; that which I saw were outstanding and incidents of his *firāsa* require a large book.

He informed his companions that the Tartars had entered the Levant (*al-Shām*) in 699 AH , that the Muslim armies would be uprooted, that there would not be indiscriminate killings in Damascus and nor would people be indiscriminately taken captive, and that the greed and passion of the army will be for wealth. That was even before the Tartars had intended to move.

He then informed the people and rulers in the year 702AH, when the Tartars had moved and were heading for the Levant, that they would be routed and defeated, and that victory and triumph would be for the Muslims. He also swore on that more than seventy times. He would be asked to say, *inshāʾ Allah*, at which he would say, "*Inshāʾ Allah*, in the sense that it will happen and not in the sense that it is suspended." I heard him say this. He said, "When they rallied against me, I told them not to do so. Allah Most High has written this in the Preserved Tablet (*al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūẓ*) that on this occasion they will be defeated and that victory is for the armies of Islam."

He said, "I fed some princes and soldiers the sweetness of victory before they had even left to meet the enemy." His minor *firāsa* in these two incidents were like rain.

When he was summoned to Egypt and his murder was intended—this was after his abilities became known and they had plotted against him—his companions gathered to bid him farewell. They said, "Many letters have reached us that the people are plotting to murder you." He said, "I swear by Allah, they will never be able to do so." They said, "Will you be imprisoned?" He said, "Yes, and the incarceration will be lengthy. Then I shall come out and speak of the Sunnah in front of people." I heard him say that.

When his enemy, the one titled Jashnakir,[41] took over the country, people informed him and said, "Now he will do what he wishes with you." At this he performed a *sajda* of thanks to Allah and made it lengthy. He was then asked what the reason behind the prostration was. He said, "This is the beginning of his disgrace, the separation of his dignity from now and the nearness of the end of his rule." He was asked when this would be. He said, "The army's horses will hardly be bound to eat fodder on *qurṭ* (a species of plant fed to horses), but his kingdom shall be overrun." It happened as he informed. I heard this from him.

He once said, "My companions and others enter upon me and I see in their faces and eyes things which I do not mention to them." So I said to him, "What if you informed others apart from me?" So he said, "Do you wish that I become a fortune-teller like those of the rulers?"

I once said to him, "If you were to treat us according to what you see, then that would be more conducive in [making us]

41— Baibars al-Jashnakir (d.1310), or Baibars II, was the twelfth Mamluk Sultan of Egypt (1308–1309). He was of Circassian heritage. (IN)

steadfast and pious." He said, "You won't be able to bear me for even a Friday." Or he said a month.

On more than one occasion he informed me of such inner things about me that I had intended to do and not spoken about. He told of some major incidents that were to happen in the future but did not determine a time for them. I have seen some of them occur and await the rest. What his major companions witnessed of this is much more than what I have seen. Allah is the most knowledgeable.

15. Ibn al-Qayyim writes in *Madārij al-Sālikīn* (vol.3, p.68) after detailed discussion about the station of *Wajd* (ecstasy):

Its levels are four. The weakest is *tawājud*, which is a type of unnatural behavior, affectation and taking pains to bring it on... the second level is *mawājid*, which is the result of litanies (*awrād*) and their outcomes. The third level is *wajd*, which is the fruit of the actions of the hearts, namely, to love for Allah's sake and hate for Allah's sake. It is like what the Prophet ﷺ has made the result of loving Allah and His Prophet more than anything else; the outcome of loving for His sake and disliking to return to disbelief is similar to hating to be cast into the fire. This *wajd* is the fruit of the actions of the heart which are to love for Allah's sake and dislike for His sake. The fourth level is *wujūd*, which is the pinnacle of *iḥsān*. One ascends to it from the station of *iḥsān*. When the seeing of his Cherisher overcomes his heart until he reaches a point as if he is seeing Him, and he becomes firmly established in that, then he has earned an ability that suppresses the commands of his inner

self which then change into different commands and a new temperament until he is raised afresh in a way that is different to his first upbringing and he is born anew.

From among those things that are mentioned regarding Sayyidunā ʿĪsā ﷺ is that he said, "Oh Children of Israel, you shall never enter the realm of the heavens until you are born a second time." I have heard Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah ﷺ mention this and explain that "birth" is of two types—one is the conventional one, and the other is the birth of the heart and soul and their leaving the carnal self and the darkness of [one's] temperament.

He said, "When this birth is on account of the Prophet then he is like a father for the believers. Ubayy Ibn Kaʿb ﷺ said, 'The Prophet is more dear to the believers than themselves, he is a father to them.'" Ibn Taymiyyah said, "And the meaning of this verse of the Qurʾān, *'His wives are their mothers,'* (33:6) is that the motherhood of the wives of the Prophet in respect to the believers is established when the Prophet's fatherhood is established." He said, "The shaykh, teacher and educator is the father of the soul, whereas the biological father is the father of the body."

16. Ibn al-Qayyim writes in *Madārij al-Sālikīn* (vol.3, p.128):

Abū Ismāʿīl al-Hirawī writes, "Time (*waqt*) is a receptacle (*ẓarf*) for events (*kawn*)." Time, according to the theologians (*mutakallimīn*), consists of the joining of one event with another; it is the relation between two events.

His saying that time is a receptacle for events means it is a vessel for that which is created (*takwīn*). It is a vessel of time in which that which has been created falls into. It is like the *ẓarf* of place in which the body comes into. However, "time" in the nomenclature of the Community is more specific than that. Abū ʿAlī al-Daqqāq said, "*Waqt* (according to the Community of Sufis) is that which you are in. If you are involved in the world, then your time is the world. If you are involved in the hereafter, then your time is the hereafter. If you are in joy, then your time is happiness. If you are in sorrow, then your time is sorrow." What he means is that *waqt* is that which has overcome the person at that time. It could at times mean that *waqt* is what is between the two tenses: the past and the future. This is the terminology of the majority of the Community. This is why they say, the Sufi and *faqīr* is the son of his time (*ibn al-waqt*).

What they mean is that his ambition is such that he does not go beyond that which is the most superior thing for him to do and most beneficial for him. He does that which is sought from him at the time and continuing hour. He has no care for the past and what is coming, but cares for the time he is in, for indeed preoccupying one's self with the past and the future wastes the present time; whenever a time comes, he is preoccupied with the [other] two, and so all of his time has passed.

Imām al-Shafʿī ﷺ said, "I remained in the company of the Sufis and did not benefit from them in anything except two sentences. I heard them say, 'Time is a sword, if you don't tear it apart, it will tear you.' And, 'If you don't preoccupy yourself with the truth then it (yourself) will preoccupy you in falsehood.'"

I say: how excellent are these sentences. How beneficial, concise and representative are they regarding the lofty aspirations of he who uttered them and his vigilance. Al-Shāfiʿī's praise of this group, in relation to the value of their words, suffices in this matter.

Some of them have divided the Sufis into four types: *Aṣḥāb al-Sawābiq*, *Aṣḥāb al-ʿAwāqib*, *Aṣḥāb al-Waqt* and *Aṣḥāb al-Ḥaqq*. As for the *Aṣḥāb al-Sawābiq*, their hearts are always involved in that which has preceded them from Allah because of their knowledge that the eternal decree (*al-ḥukm al-azalī*) will not change due to that which the slave earns [in deeds]. They say that he who has been driven far by that fate that has preceded him, then no means will draw him close. Their thoughts will always be in that. In spite of that, they strive earnestly to perform those actions that they have been ordered to do, abstain from those actions that they have been told not to do, and gain proximity to Allah in different ways without relying on them and having regard for them. One of them said:

How can I please you, save that you grant me divine tawfīq,
What an idea and how wrong it is, divine tawfīq is not from me,

If I don't have something that has preceded me in fate,
Then there is no benefit in that deed of mine that I have sent forth.

As for the *Aṣḥāb al-ʿAwāqib*, they are in contemplation of that state in which their affairs will end for indeed all affairs are according to their last, actions are according to their end, and the final outcome (*ʿāqiba*) is concealed. It is as it is said:

Let not good times deceive you,
For beneath them lie hidden difficulties.

How many seasons of spring were there, the trees of which became bright, the flowers of which blossomed and the fruits of which matured, on which heavenly calamity befell and it became as Allah Most High has said, "*...until when the earth took on its ornament and was fully adorned, and its people thought that they had control over it, Our command came to it at night or by day, and We turned it into a stubble, as if it had not been there a day earlier. This is how We elaborate the verses for a people who reflect.*" (10:24)

How many murīd is there who stumbled
inspite of the excellence of his firm intention,
He fell onto the ground with hands and jaw dropping.

It was said to some of them who had been seen doing that which is contrary to what they had pledged, "What happened to you?" So they replied, "There was a veil," and recited:

You thought well of the days when they were good,
And you did not fear the wickedness which fate would bring,

The nights made peace with you and that deluded you,
And in the serenity of the nights, grief strikes,

There is no amazement at how those who perished did so,
Amazement is only for those who were saved; how were they rescued?

You wonder at my illness, when it is my health that is surprising.
Those who retreated backwards are many, there are many who plunged into difficulties:

Take the one among the thousand, and cast away the rest.

As to the *Aṣḥāb al-Waqt*, they do not preoccupy themselves with what has preceded or that state in which their affairs will end. Rather, they preoccupy themselves by taking due care of the current time and that which is incumbent on them at that time. They say that the *ʿārif* is the son of his time (*ibn al-waqt*); there is no past for him and no future. Some of them saw Sayyidunā Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq ﷺ in their dreams and asked him for advice. He said, "Be a son of your time."

As to the *Aṣḥāb al-Ḥaqq*, they are the people of time and place; they possess them and direct them. They have been gripped by seeing Him away from viewing time. They do not become unoccupied to consider the time or the place. The issue is like it is said:

I am not aware whether my night has become prolonged or not,
How can he who is of little worth know of that?

If I were to free myself to prolong my night,
And observe the stars, then I would be a disgrace.

Surely, the lovers are so busy in love that they care not for the shortening of the night or its lengthening. Junayd said, "I entered on Sarrī one day and asked him, 'How was your morning?' He then recited a poem:

I don't have any relief in the day or the night,
I don't care if the night is long or short.

He then said, 'There is no night or day by your Lord.'" What he means is that he cares not for time, but is with He who determines the night and day.

17. Ibn al-Qayyim writes in *Madārij al-Sālikīn* (vol.3, p.334):

Section:

The author of *Manāzil* writes in *Bāb al-Maʿrifa* (*Chapter regarding Maʿrifa*), "Allah Most High says, '*When they hear that which has been revealed to the Prophet, you see their eyes flowing with tears on account of the truth they have recognized.*' (5:83) The meaning of *maʿrifa* is encompassing something as it is..."

The difference between *ʿilm* and *maʿrifa* according to the people of this matter[42] is this: *maʿrifa* according to them is that knowledge the prerequisites and demands of which the possessor of it acts upon. Hence, the word *maʿrifa* will not just be used in the meaning of knowledge. Rather, only he who knows Allah, the path that leads to Allah and the harms and highwaymen on the path, will be ascribed as having *maʿrifa*; he is in a State (*ḥāl*) with Allah that testifies that he has *maʿrifa*.

The *ʿārif*, according to them, is he who has recognised Allah Most High together with His names, qualities and actions. He has then been truthful to Allah in his deeds, and has been sincere to Him in his goals and intentions. He has then cast off from his character vile traits and harms, and purified himself from his impurities, dirt and sins. He has then been patient in completing what Allah has ordained him to do in both good and difficult times, and has then called towards Him with insight into his religion and verses. He has then confined the *daʿwa* to Him alone in that which His Messenger brought, and did not mix it with the views of men, their tasting [of spiritual bliss]

42—The Sufis .

(*dhawq*), ecstatic states (*mawājid*), syllogisms (*maqāyis*) and rationalist studies (*maʿqūlāt*), nor does he bring them on par with that which the Prophet ﷺ came with. This is the person who in reality deserves to be called an *ʿārif* when others are being called such pretentiously and metaphorically. They (the people of this knowledge) have spoken regarding *maʿrifa* in terms of its signs and examples. Some of them said, "Among the signs of *maʿrifa* of Allah is the acquisition of veneration for Him; whoever's *maʿrifa* increases, so will his veneration." They also said, "*Maʿrifa* necessitates serenity (*sukūn*); whoever's *maʿrifa* increases, so will his serenity."

One of our companions asked me, "What is the sign of the *maʿrifa* that they speak of?" I told him, "For the heart to feel tranquil with Allah." He said to me, "Its sign is that one feels his heart is close to Allah and he finds himself close to Him."

Al-Shiblī said, "An *ʿārif* has no bonds [with anything], a lover has no complaints, a slave has no claims, he who is scared is not settled, and there is no escape for anyone from Allah." These words are excellent. For indeed, true *maʿrifa* separates all relations from the heart and connects it to He Who he recognizes so there does not remain any connection with anything apart from He. Other connections do not pass by him, except that they continue ahead hastily, they do not pass as though they want to settle...

It is said, "The [state of the] *ʿārif* is above what he says and the [the state of the] *ʿālim* is above what he says." The meaning of this is that the knowledge of the *ʿālim* is more vast than his [actual] condition and state, while the condition and state of the *ʿārif* is above what he speaks and informs of.

Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī said, "Allah Most High opens for the *ʿārif* while in his bed such things that he does not reveal to him while he is standing offering *salah*." Someone said, "The *ʿārif* speaks of *maʿrifa* through his heart and state while silent." Dhū'l-Nūn said, "Everything has a punishment, and the punishment of the *ʿārif* is his being cut off from the *dhikr* of Allah."

Some said, "The ostentation (*riyā'*) of the *ʿārifs* is better than the sincerity of the *murīds*." This is a sentence that is, on the outset, deeply abominable and in need of explanation: the *ʿārif* does not show off to people with an aim of seeking a position in his heart; his "ostentation" is only a means of advice, guidance and instruction to be followed. He calls to Allah through his actions in the same way that he calls towards Him through his words. He benefits himself with his knowledge and others also benefit from him. The sincerity of the *murīd* [on the other hand] is confined to himself. The *ʿārif* combines sincerity and *daʿwa* to Allah. His sincerity is in his heart and he expresses his knowledge and spiritual state so that he may be followed. The *ʿārif* benefits in silence, while the *ʿālim* only benefits through his words—and if they were to remain calm then realities would once more open to them.

Dhū'l-Nūn said, "The ascetics are the kings of the hereafter and they are the poverty stricken ones (*fuqarā'*) among the *ʿārifs*." Junayd was asked regarding the *ʿārifs*. He said, "The color of water is the color of its vessel." This sentence is indicative of what the reality of servitude (*ʿubūdiyya*) is: to become colored by the color of the different types of servitude. While you see him offering *salah*, you also see him performing *dhikr*,

or as a reciter of the Qurʾān (*qārī*), or as a teacher, or as a student, or as a *mujāhid*, or as a *ḥājī*, or as someone who helps the weak or provides aid to the one who is worried. He takes part in every act of goodness. With those who are concerned with their livelihood (*mutasabbib*) he is a *mutasabbib*, with those who are students he is a student, with the *ghāzīs* he is a *ghāzī*, with those who offer *salah* he is a *muṣallī*, and with those who offer alms he is one of them. In the stations of servitude, he moves from one type of servitude to another. But he is firmly established on one object of worship, he does not move to another...

Abū Saʿīd said, "*Maʿrifa* comes from Allah and through effort." This sentence is excellent, it indicates that *maʿrifa* is the fruit of the efforts in completing actions (*ʿamal*) and the manifestation of *wajd* in spiritual states; this is the outcome of the actions of the limbs. The spiritual state [experienced by] the heart cannot be attained just by knowledge and discussion. He who has no *ʿamal* and spiritual state, for him is no *maʿrifa*...

Some of the predecessors said, "The sleep of the *ʿārif* is wakefulness, his breathing is *tasbīh*, and the sleep of an *ʿārif* is superior than the prayer of one who is heedless (*ghāfil*) of his Lord." The sleep of an *ʿārif* is only wakefulness because his heart is alive while his eyes sleep and his soul is in prostration beneath the throne of his Lord and Creator. His body is in bed while his heart is around the throne. His sleep is only superior to the *salah* of the *ghāfil* because the body of he who is *ghāfil* is standing in prayer while his heart is in the lavatories of the world and in [worldly] aspirations. That is why his wakefulness is a [type of] sleep, because his heart is dead.

It is said that the company of the *ʿārifs* call you from six things to six: from doubt to firm belief (*yaqīn*), from ostentation (*riyāʿ*) to sincerity (*ikhlāṣ*), from heedlessness (*ghafla*) to remembrance (*dhikr*), from yearning for the world to yearning for the hereafter, from pride to humility, and from bad thoughts to friendly advice.

18. Ibn al-Qayyim writes in *Madārij al-Sālikīn* (vol.3, p.110):

He (Shaykh Abū Ismāʿīl al-Hirawī) said, "The second level is observing the light of unveiling (*nūr al-kashf*) and this level drapes the cloth of turning [to Allah], gives the taste of illumination (*tajallī*) and protects from the defect of being diverted from His remembrance."

This level is more complete than the one before it, for that level involved observing that which preceded it with the light of knowledge (*nūr al-ʿilm*). This level is observing unveiling (*kashf*) in a state (*ḥāl*) that has taken possession over his heart until it diverts him away from the creation. The cloth of his turning to Allah alone and turning away from everything apart from Him has been draped over him.

The light of unveiling (*nūr al-kashf*) according to them is the beginning of *shuhūd* and it is a light that manifests the meanings of the *Al-Asmāʾ al-Ḥusnā* upon the heart by which the darkness of the heart becomes enlightened and with which the veil of unveiling is lifted. Do not turn to anything apart from this otherwise [your] foot will slip after becoming firm.

You will surely find in the writings of some of them that the manifestation of the divine essence (*tajallī al-dhāt*) necessitates

this and that, and that the manifestation of the divine attributes (*tajallī al-ṣifāt*) necessitates this and that, and that the manifestation of the divine actions (*tajallī al-afʿāl*) necessitates this and that. The Community is only concerned with words, and so some presume that they mean that the manifestation of divine essence, divine attributes and divine actions is done through the physical eye. Hence, some of them fall into words of ecstasy (*shaṭaḥāt*) and ruin. Those who are sincere (*ṣādiq*) and the *ʿārifs* are innocent of this.

They (the Community) are only pointing towards perfect *maʿrifa*, the raising of veils of heedlessness (*ghafla*), doubt and turning away [from Allah], and the power of *maʿrifa* taking over the heart by removing the seeing of everything totally [apart from Him]. The heart will not witness anything save He. They see this in the rising of the sun: when the radiance of the stars fades, the stars do not cease to exist. The light of the sun only eclipses them and it seems they do not exist when in reality they are present in their places. Likewise, when the light of *maʿrifa* takes over the heart, its power becomes strong, and hindrances and veils are removed from the heart. Only he who is not of this (*min ahlihi*) would repudiate this. Only he who is in error and has no knowledge believes that the Pure Essence (Allah) and His Qualities appear and manifest for the slave like He Most High manifested Himself to Mount Ṭūr and as He will manifest Himself on the Day of Reckoning to people. There are many who have transgressed from the light (*nūr*) of worship, spiritual struggle and *dhikr* to the *nūr* of His Essence and Qualities.

Surely, correct worship, spiritual exercises that are in conformity with the Sharīʿa, and that *dhikr* which works hand in hand with the heart and the tongue necessitates light (*nūr*) according to the person's strength and weakness. Sometimes, that *nūr* becomes so strong that it can be seen with the eyes, and so he who is weak in differentiating between godly characteristics and those characteristics that are in accordance with servitude falls into err. As a result, he thinks that is the *nūr* of Allah. How wrong is this. There is nothing that can tolerate the light (*nūr*) of the Essence (Allah). If He Most High were to remove a veil from Himself then the entire universe would crumble like the mountain crumbled and became level when He revealed to it a small portion of His *tajallī*.

Islam has a *nūr* and *īmān* has a type of *nūr* that is stronger than it; and *iḥsān* has a *nūr* that is stronger than both. When Islam, *īmān* and *iḥsān* gather, and those veils that preoccupy one away from Allah Most High are removed, then hearts and limbs become full of that *nūr*; not with the *nūr* that is the quality (*ṣifa*) of Allah Most High. For indeed his qualities do not enter any part of His creation in the same way His creation do not enter Him. The Creator Most High is separate from the creation in His essence and qualities; there is no union (*ittiḥād*), incarnation (*ḥulūl*) and embodiment. Allah is Most High from all of that.

19. Ibn al-Qayyim writes in *Madārij al-Sālikīn* (vol.3, p.99):

His saying, "... and the tasting (*dhawq*) of conversing at night (*musāmara*) is a sense of personal relish." What they mean by *musāmara* is the conversing of the heart with its Lord

even though the tongue is silent, and the pleasure of His Most High's *dhikr* and love overcoming the slave's heart, his being present in front of Him, and his familiarity with and proximity to Him until he is as if he is speaking and conversing with Him at night—at times presenting an excuse to Him, at times flattering Him and at times praising Him until the heart is left saying without any constraints: "You are Allah, there is no deity save You." Rather, this remains the state (*ḥāl*) and position (*maqām*). The Community has not repudiated reaching this [stage] for the Prophet ﷺ said, "*Iḥsān* is that you worship Allah as if you are seeing Him." When he reaches, in the stage of *iḥsān*, a position in which it is as if he is seeing Allah Most High, then his conversation and intimate talk with Him will be like this.

20. Ibn al-Qayyim writes in *Madārij al-Sālikīn* (vol.2, p.459):

From the stations of *"it is You Whom we worship and it is You from Whom we seek aid"* (1:4) there is the station of *iḥsān*, which is the essence of *īmān*, its spirit and perfection. This station gathers all of the stations; all of them are enveloped in it. Everything that has been mentioned from the beginning of this book till here is a part of *iḥsān*.

These are twenty excellent quotes that have been selected from various portions of Ḥāfiẓ Ibn al-Qayyim's great book, *Madārij al-Sālikīn*, the commentary of *Manāzil al-Sā'irīn*. The entire book is full of invaluable treasures relating

to different issues of Taṣawwuf. Now we shall mention some examples of his writings on Taṣawwuf and the Sufi shaykhs from some of his other books, and this shall be done, *inshā'* Allah, with much brevity.

21. Ibn al-Qayyim writes in *Rawḍa al-Muḥibbin wa Nuzha al-Mushtāqīn* (p.406):

He who has recognized Allah, there is nothing more beloved for him than He; he has no yearning in anything apart from Him save that which brings him close to Him and assists him in his journey to Him.

Among the signs of *ma'rifa* is awe (*hayba*); whenever a slave's *ma'rifa* of his Lord increases, then his awe for Him and fear of Him increases. It is as Allah Most High has said, *"Only those of His servants with knowledge ('ulamā') have fear of Allah."* (35:28) In other words those who have knowledge of Him.

The Prophet ﷺ said, "I am the most knowledgeable of Allah among you and the most fearful of Him among you." He who recognizes Allah, Allah will make his life pure, everything will fear him, the fear of the creation will leave him, he will take pleasure in Allah and feel distaste for the world. *Ma'rifa* will bestow on him a sense of shame from Allah, veneration for Him, honor, contemplation, love, reliance (*tawakkul*) on Him, devotion (*ināba*) to Him, and a sense of happiness and acceptance of His command. It was said to Junayd ﷺ, "Surely, there are communities in such a place who say that they reach piety by abandoning actions." Junayd said, "These people speak of abandoning actions (*'amal*) and that for me is a serious matter. He who commits adultery and steals is better than he who says this. Those who know Allah (the *'ārifs*) have taken actions from

Allah[43] and it is Allah towards Whom they return through them. Even if a thousand years were left, I would not leave any action of piety." He said, "An *ʿārif* will not be a true *ʿārif* until he becomes like the ground which the pious and wicked trample, and like rain which waters what it likes and what it doesn't." Yaḥyā ibn Muʿādh said, "The *ʿārif* will leave the world and his desire for two things will never cease: his weeping over his self and his yearning for His Lord." Some of them said, "An *ʿārif* can never be a true *ʿārif* until he reaches a state that if he were to be given the kingdom of Sulaymān ﷺ, then that would not preoccupy him from Allah for even the duration of the blinking of an eye." It was said, "The *ʿārif* becomes intimate with Allah and feels estranged from everything apart from Him. He shows need for Allah and so He suffices him away from the creation. He lowers himself for Allah and so Allah grants him honor among people." Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī said, "That is revealed to the *ʿārif* in his bed which is not revealed to him while standing and offering prayers." Dhū'l-Nūn said, "Everything has a punishment, and the punishment of the *ʿārif* is separation from the remembrance of Allah."

In sum, the life of the heart is by remaining with Allah; the heart shall never have life without this. When the tongue is in agreement with the heart in His *dhikr* and the heart is in agreement with the aims of His Beloved; and when he considers, for His sake, an abundance of oral and physical deeds as very little, while considering that little kindness and generosity

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43— Shaykh Ibn al Qayyim ﷺ is quite clearly negating so-called Sufis who abandon the necessary elements of the faith and is stressing that the true Sufi and the correct way of Sufism is to adhere to sharīʿa at the same time. "The arifs have taken actions from Allah", here refers to taking the commands of Allah as expressed in the sharīʿa. (IN)

from Him great; and when he embraces obedience and leaves disobedience; and when he rebels against his self for his Beloved so much there is nothing of himself left; and when he fills his heart with veneration and honor for Him, preferring His pleasure (*riḍā*); and when abstaining from Him is too much to bear for him; and when existence without His *dhikr* and eagerness and yearning for Him is nothing; and when he only finds happiness in His *dhikr*, respects His orders and gives preference to Him, then he is a true lover.

Junayd said, I heard Ḥarith al-Muḥāsibī say, "Love is your total affection for something; then, it is your preferring Him over yourself, your soul and your wealth; then, it is your agreement with Him in private and in public; and then, in your knowledge of your shortcomings in loving Him."

It was said, "Love is a fire in the heart that burns everything away apart from the wish of the beloved from the lover." It was said, "Rather, it is the exerting of all efforts in pleasing the beloved. It will not be complete except by coming away from seeing love to seeing the beloved." It comes in some divine messages, "My slave, I am—I swear by your right—your lover, for the sake of My right over you, be My lover."

ʿAbdullah ibn al-Mubārak said, "Whoever is given a little love and no fear that is equal to it, then such a person is deluded." Yaḥyā ibn Muʿādh said, "An iota of love is more beloved to me than seventy years of worship devoid of love."

Abū Bakr al-Kattānī said, "The issue of love was discussed in Makkah during the Hajj and the shaykhs[44] spoke regarding it.

44— In other words the Sufi shaykhs

Junayd was the youngest among them and so they said, 'Bring what you have oh Iraqi.' He lowered his head and his eyes flowed with tears. He then said, 'A slave who ignores his *nafs*, he is connected to the remembrance of his Lord, he is firm in fulfilling His rights, he looks at Him with his heart, his heart is burnt by the radiance of His Essence (*huwiyya*), he is totally dedicated to drinking from the glass of His love. If he were to speak then he does so for Allah, if he utters something then that is from Allah, if he moves then that is with the instruction of Allah, if he remains silent then that is with Allah—such a person is for and with Allah.' The shaykhs wept and said, 'Is there anything more than that? May Allah suffice you oh crown of the *ʿārifs* (*tāj al-ʿārifīn*).'"

It was said that Allah revealed to Sayyidunā Dāwūd ﷺ, "Oh Dāwūd, I have forbidden it on hearts that My love and the love of others should enter them." All of the *ʿārifīn* are agreed that love will not be correct except with agreement (*muwāfaqa*), so much so that some of them said, "The reality of love is agreeing to the Beloved in all that pleases and displeases Him." The Community[45] is agreed that love will not be correct except by there being one beloved.

It was narrated that a man claimed to be annihilated in the love of a person. So the beloved said to the man, "How can this be when my brother has a better face than I and is more handsome?" So the man turned to the brother, at which the youth pushed him and said, "Oh, is it that he who claims affection for us looks to others apart from us?"

45— They are the Sufis ﷺ.

If that is My wish for those who turn their backs on Me, then what is My desire for those who turn to me?"

Junayd was asked, "Why does the lover cry when he meets the Beloved?" He responded, "That is only on account of happiness in Him, and ecstasy in severely yearning for Him." He said, "It reached me that two boys hugged each other and one of them said, 'O, how great is his yearning (*shawq*)' And the other said, 'O, how great is his passion (*wajd*).'"

There was an old lady whose relative was absent. He returned from a journey and her family expressed happiness and delight at his return. She then began to cry and so it was said to her, "What is this weeping?" She said, "The arrival of this youth has reminded me of the day of arriving to Allah."

Some of the lovers said, "The hearts of those who yearn are enlightened with the light (*nūr*) of Allah. When their yearning stirs, a light radiates between the heavens and the earth. Allah Most High presents these people to the angels and says, 'They are those who yearn for Me. I make you witness that I yearn for them.'"

22. Ibn al-Qayyim writes in *Al-Fawā'id*[46] (p.55):

A Precious Gem

Between the slave, Allah and paradise lies a bridge that can be crossed with two steps: a step away from his *nafs* and a step away from people; he should nullify his *nafs* and eliminate it in those matters between himself and people, and he should nullify people and eliminate them in those matters between

46— Published by Dar al Kotob al ilmiyah [*sic*], Beirut.

himself and Allah. He should only turn to he who guides him to Allah and that path that leads to Him…

There is no place of solitude (*khalwa*) in this abode, so make it (the place of *khalwa*) in your self. Surely, fascinating things will tempt you, know them and be on the guard. Preoccupations will not harm you when you remain in solitude from them while you are involved in them: the light of the Truth (*ḥaqq*) is brighter than the sun, and it is only befitting for he who is dim sighted that he turns away from it.

The way to Allah is clear of those who have doubt and those who follow their desires; it is full of those who have certainty (*ahl al-yaqīn*) and patience. They are like signposts on the road. *"And We made from among them leaders, who gave guidance under Our Command when they used to be patient and believe with certainty in our signs."* (32:24)

23. Ibn al-Qayyim writes in *Al-Fawā'id* (p.59):

A Precious Gem

Allah Most High says, *"As for those who strive hard in Us, We will surely guide them to Our Ways."* (26:69). He Most High has connected guidance (*hidāya*) to jihād. The most perfect of people in terms guidance is he who is the greatest in jihād. The most obligatory form of jihād is the jihād against the *nafs*, the jihād against desires, the jihād against Satan and the jihād against the material world. He who fights these four for Allah, then Allah will guide him to the paths of His pleasure, which will bring him to His paradise. He who leaves jihād, then he will miss out on guidance according to that extent he was away from jihād.

Junayd said, "Those who strive hard against their desires in Our way by means of repentance, then We will guide him to the paths of sincerity." It is not possible to wage jihād against his enemy on the outside save for he who struggles hard against the enemies within. He who triumphs over them will triumph over his enemy. He whose inner self defeats him, then his enemy will defeat him.

24. Ibn al-Qayyim writes in *Al-Fawā'id* (p.117):

Section:

The sign of good *irāda*[47] is when the aspiration of the *murīd* is pleasing his Lord, preparing to meet Him, grief over that time that has passed in anything other than pleasing Him, and sorrow over that time passed in anything other than drawing close to Him and feeling delighted with Him. In sum, there is no interest apart from Him in the morning and evening.

25. Ibn al-Qayyim writes in *Al-Fawā'id* (p.170):

The *ma'rifa* of Allah Most High is of two types: *ma'rifa* of confession (*iqrār*), and that is the one in which all people are participant—the pious and impious, and the obedient and disobedient. The second is that *ma'rifa* that necessitates being shy of Him, showing love to Him, attaching the heart to Him, yearning to meet Him, fearing Him, turning to Him, being close to Him and fleeing from the creation towards Him. This is the special *ma'rifa* that is on the tongues of the Community.[48] Their various levels in it can only be enumerated by

47— Among the Sufis this means preferring the will of the Master over one's will. (IN)
48— They are the Sufi shaykhs ﷺ.

He Who informed them about Himself and revealed to their hearts a portion of His *maʿrifa* that He had kept hidden from those apart from them.

Each has described this *maʿrifa* according to his stage and that which was revealed to him from it. The one with the most *maʿrifa* from among the creation said regarding it, "I cannot praise You, You are as You praise yourself." He also informed that He Most High will reveal to him some of his words of praise on the Day of Reckoning which he is unable to pronounce now...

Section:

Ignorance of the path, ignorance of its difficulties and ignorance of its purpose causes much hardship with little benefit, because the person may exert great effort in performing a supererogatory (*nafl*) duty while neglecting an obligatory (*farḍ*) duty, or in performing an action that is connected to the limbs and is not in agreement with the action of the heart, or an action that is connected to the inner self while the outward self is not bound to conformity, or in a sense of determination to carry out an action without being clear in observing the purpose, or in performing an action without being cautious of its evil consequences while doing it and thereafter, or in carrying out an action in which he is heedless of seeing divine kindness [in performing it] and does not free himself from adjoining his self in its performance, or in an action in which he did not see shortcomings and thereafter he defends it, or in an action in which he has not fulfilled his due in advice and kindness and he thinks he has fulfilled its due. All of these are among those

things that lessen the benefit in spite of much difficulty. It is Allah Who grants *tawfīq*.

Section:

When the servant makes firm intention to travel towards Allah Most High and fulfill His will, many delusions and hindrances will confront him. At first, he will be deceived by desires, high posts, pleasures, prospective brides and clothes. If he remains occupied with them, then he will be separated, and if he rejects them, does not occupy himself with them and is sincere in his quest, then he will be tried by people following him, kissing his hand, making space for him in gatherings, requesting him for *duʿāʾ*, hoping to gain his *baraka* and the like. If he remains occupied with that, then he will be separated from Allah and that will be his lot. If he were to separate himself from that and not remain with that, then he would be tested with miracles (*karāma*) and *kashf*. If he occupies himself with them, then he would be separated from Allah and that would be his lot. If he were not to occupy himself with them, then he would be tested by renunciation, solitude, the pleasure of being with Allah, and the honor of being alone and free from the world. If he were to become occupied with that, then he would be cut off from the purpose, and if he were not to become occupied with that and walk eyes set towards that purpose that Allah has set for him and that which He would like of him, in a way that His slave performs that which He loves and prefers where ever it is and however it is, regardless of whether he becomes tired by it or feels at rest, in luxury or pain, and regardless of whether it brings him among the people or

separates him from them, then he does not choose for himself anything that his Lord and Master does not choose for him. He stands by his command, completing it as much as possible; his *nafs* is less important to him that he gives importance to its comfort and pleasure over the pleasure of his Master and His command. This then would be the servant who has reached [his Master], fulfilled [His order] and nothing has cut him off from his Master at all. Divine *tawfīq* is with Allah.

26. Ibn al-Qayyim writes in *Al-Fawā'id* (p.192):

Among those who do *dhikr* is he who begins with the *dhikr* of the tongue even if it is with negligence (*ghafla*). He continues doing it until his heart is present and they both (the tongue and the heart) do *dhikr* hand in hand. Among them is he who does not see that and does not begin in spite of his negligence. Rather, he remains calm until his heart is present and then he begins *dhikr* with his heart. When it becomes strong, then his tongue follows and they all go hand in hand. The first transports the *dhikr* from his tongue to his heart, while the second transports from his heart to his tongue without emptying his heart of any *dhikr*. Rather, he firstly becomes calm until he feels that it should be uttered. When he feels that, his heart speaks. Then the speech of the heart moves to the *dhikr* of the tongue (*dhikr lisānī*), and then he becomes engrossed in that until he finds every part of him in *dhikr*.

The most superior *dhikr* and beneficial is that in which the heart and tongue are together and is from the Prophetic *dhikr*. The one who performs *dhikr* has witnessed the meaning and goal of *dhikr*.

27. Ibn al-Qayyim writes in *Al-Fawā'id* (p.196):

A Precious Gem

Ināba is devoting the heart to Allah Most High like devoting (*i'tikāf*) the body in the mosque without leaving it. The reality of that is devoting the heart to His love and His remembrance with reverence and high esteem, and devoting the limbs to His obedience with sincerity for Him while following His Messenger. He who does not devote his heart to Allah Alone, then he is devoted to various types of images (*tamāthil*).

The Leader of the Monotheists (*Imām al-ḥunafā'*) (Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm ﷺ) said, *"What are these images to which you are devoted?"* (21:52) He and his community had gone in different paths in devotion—for his community, devotion was to images and for him it was to the Lord Most High.

The word *tamāthil* is the plural of *timthāl* and they are images representing people. The attachment of the heart to, its preoccupation with and reliance on something apart from Allah [demonstrates] one's devotion to images which appear in the heart. It is the example of the devotion to the images of idols. It is because of this that the *shirk* of those who worship idols is [their] devotion with their hearts, intentions and will to their images. When there are images in the heart which have take possession of it and enslaved it in such a way that it is devoted to them then this heart is an example of the devotion to idols.

It is because of this that the Prophet ﷺ called such a heart a slave to idols and supplicated that it falls and does not rise. He said, "May the slave of the *dinar* fall and may the slave of the *dirham* fall. Let him fall upon his face, and not rise after

his fall until he falls again. May he be pricked with a thorn and not extract the thorn."

People in this abode are on a journey, all of them. Every traveller is transitorily heading towards his purpose and will stop at that host who pleases him. The seeker of Allah and the hereafter is only heading towards Allah during his journey and stops by Him when he reaches Him.

This is his aim in his journey and at its end it will be, *"O content soul, return to your Lord, pleased and pleasing unto Him. Enter My slave and enter My paradise."* (89:27-30) The wife of Firʿawn said, *"Oh my Lord, build for me a house by You in paradise."* (66:12) She sought a house by Him before seeking paradise, indeed your neighbor comes before your home (*al-jār qabl al-dār*).

From the Sayings of Shaykh ʿAlī:

"It was said to me while sleeping, in a state that was like wakefulness and wakefulness that was like sleep, 'Do not show poverty to anyone save Myself, or I will increase it for you in exchange for violating your limit in your servitude. I have tested you with poverty so you may become pure gold; so don't become tainted after you have been minted. I have prescribed poverty for you and wealth for Myself, so if you attach yourself to Me, then I shall attach you to wealth, and if you attach yourself to someone apart from Me, then I shall cut you off from My help to drive you away from My door. Do not depend on something apart from Us for indeed it will be a calamity for you and will ruin you. If you rely on a deed, then We shall return it back to you. If you rely on *maʿrifa* then We shall take

it from you. If you rely on *wajd* then We shall gradually bring you near to punishment (*istidrāj*). If you rely on knowledge then We shall bring you to a standstill, and if you rely on the creation then We shall put you in their trust. Be pleased with Us as your Lord and We shall be pleased with you as a slave."

28. Ibn al-Qayyim writes in *Al-Wābil al-Ṣayyib min al-Kalim al-Ṭayyib*[49] (p.68):

Allah Most High says, *"And do not obey the one whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance, and who has followed his desire and whose behavior has been neglectful (furuṭā)."* (18:28) When the slave intends to follow a man, then let him look whether he is of the people of *dhikr* or those who are heedless (*ghāfil*), and whether desire or revelation are governing him. If that which is governing him is desire and he is heedless then he has been neglectful (*furuṭā*). The meaning of *furuṭā* has been explained as being "neglectful": in other words, that which was necessary to adhere to and fulfill, and in which was his goodness and success was wasted and he was neglectful in their respect. It has also been explained as exceeding the limits (*isrāf*), becoming ruined (*ihlāk*) and also going against the truth. All of these views are close. The purpose is that Allah Most High has prohibited obeying he who has gathered all of these traits. It is apt for a man to look at his shaykh, his exemplar (*qudwa*) and the person he is following. If he finds him as such then he should remain at distance from him. If he finds him among those upon whom the *dhikr* of Allah Most High and adherence

49— Published by Dār al-Bayān, Damascus.

to the Sunnah has gained ascendancy, that he is not neglectful but prudent, hold fast to him.

The only difference between he who is alive and he who is dead is through *dhikr*. The example of he who remembers his Lord and he does not is the example of the living and the dead...

He Most High said, *"Say (on My behalf) 'Oh My servants who believe, fear your Lord. Those who do good deeds in this world will have a good return, and the earth of Allah is wide. Certainly those who observe patience will be given their reward in full without measure.'"* (39:10) These are four places in which the Most High has mentioned that He will twice recompense the good doer on account of his good deed—a reward in the world and a reward in the hereafter. Thus, a good deed will be rewarded urgently, and it sure will; and a bad deed will be recompensed urgently, and it sure will.

Is this not the case? He rewards the good doer by opening his bosom to joy by opening his heart, pleasing him and providing him with bliss on account of his dealing with His Lord Most High, and His obedience and *dhikr*; he also gives him pleasure of the soul on account of his love—and his *dhikr* of and delight in his Lord Most High is greater than the delight a person who is close to a generous Sultan feels on account of his authority. He rewards the evildoer with a narrow chest and a heart that is hard, unfocused, dark, and full of hate, worry, distress, sorrow and fear.

This is something that he who has the even most little sense and life cannot doubt. Rather, worry, distress, sorrow and straitened circumstances are punishments in this life, the fire of the

temporal abode and the present hell. Turning to Allah Most High and devotion to Him, to be content and pleased with Him, to fill the heart with His love, to be fond of His *dhikr*, and to be happy and elated by His *ma'rifa* is the reward of this world, a paradise, and a mode of living which the way of the life of the kings cannot compare to at all.

I heard Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah sanctify his soul) say, "Surely, there is a heaven in this world; he who does not enter it will not enter the heaven of the hereafter." He once said to me, "What can my enemies do to me? Me, my heaven and my garden are in my chest. If I travel, then they are with me and will never leave me. My imprisonment is solitude (*khalwa*), to be slain for me is martyrdom and to be exiled from my land is travelling.

He used to say during his imprisonment in the citadel, "If I were to spend this entire fortress in gold then I would not be able to give thanks for this blessing," or, "I could never repay them for the good and its like that has come to me in it." He used to say in his prostration while imprisoned, "Oh Allah, help me in remembering You, thanking You and in comely worship of You," *Mā shā'* Allah.

He once said to me, "The real prisoner is he whose heart is imprisoned from his Lord and the true captive is he who is captured by his passions." When he entered the citadel and was inside its walls, he gazed upon them and recited the verse, "*Then a wall will be placed between them, which will have a gate. In its inner side, there will be divine mercy, while towards its outer side there will be divine punishment.*" (57:13) Allah knows, I never

saw anyone who had a more comfortable life than him despite the difficulties in living, and lack of comfort and luxury, rather things that were opposite to them.

Despite the imprisonment, intimidation and oppression, he had, in spite of that, a purer life than all people. He was the most generous, the strongest of heart and the most joyful of soul. The radiance of bliss shone on his face. When we were seized with fear and our thoughts turned negative, and the earth grew narrow for us, we would go to him. No sooner did we look at him and hear his words than all of this would leave us, and change to relief, strength, certainty and tranquillity.

Glory be to He Who lets His slaves witness His heaven before meeting Him, Who opens its doors to them in the abode of deeds and Who gives them something of its freshness, breeze and perfume that they might expend their efforts to seek it and hasten towards it.

Some of the *ʿārifīn* used to say, "If kings and the sons of kings knew what we had, they would fight us over it with swords." Another said, "The people of the world are pitiful. They left it and did not taste the best of what is inside it." It was asked, "What is the best that is in it?" He said, "The love of Allah Most High, his *maʿrifa* and his *dhikr*," or something to that effect. Another said, "There are times when the heart dances in delight." Another said, "There are times when I say, If the people of heaven have anything like this, then their life is beautiful."

To love Allah, His *maʿrifa*, His constant *dhikr*, to find peace and tranquillity in Him, to make Him the sole object of love,

fear, hope and trust; to conduct oneself in a way that He Alone is the master over the cares of the slave, his aspirations and intentions—this is the heaven of the world and a bliss to which no other bliss can compare. It is consolation for the eyes of the lovers and the life of the *ʿārifīn*.

The eyes of the people will only be consoled by this according to how their eyes become consoled by Allah Most High. He whose eye becomes consoled by Allah, every eye will be consoled by him. He whose eye does not become consoled by Allah, he will become worn in attaining the world with much regret.

IMĀM ḤĀFIẒ SHAMS AL-DĪN

MUḤAMMAD IBN AḤMAD IBN ʿUTHMĀN AL-DHAHABĪ

AL-SHĀFIʿĪ

Imām Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī mentions in *Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part 2, p.301) in the biographies of some jurists:

"ʿAbdullah ibn Abū Bakr ibn Abū al-Badr Muḥammad al-Ḥarbī al-Baghdādī, the jurist (*faqīh*), the *faqīr*, the ascetic (*zāhid*), the exemplar and the last of the shaykhs of Iraq. He was also known by the name *Katīla*...

"He was an exemplary person, an ascetic, a person of worship and one of many spiritual states (*aḥwāl*) and miracles. The people of government and others would extol and revere him; he had many followers and companions. He remained in the company of Shaykh Aḥmad al-Muhandiz and other pious men. Abū ʿAbdullah ibn al-Dubāhī, the ascetic, has narrated from him."

Al-Dhahabī said: "Ibn Al-Dubāhī narrated to us regarding the shaykh that in spite of his rank he would at times trill and sing to himself. He would do this with skill, elegance and cheeriness. Ibn Al-Dubāhī said he heard the shaykh say, 'I was on a rooftop in Baghdad on the Day of 'Arafa lying on my back. I then felt I was standing in 'Arafa with the people for a short while. Then I felt I was in my original state in Baghdad lying down. When the pilgrims returned a man approached me saying aloud: "Oh my master, I have sworn I saw you at 'Arafa this year, let my wife be divorced if that not be so." A group of people replied: "You must be imagining. The shaykh didn't perform the Hajj this year."' Al-Dubāhī said that the shaykh said: "I told him, go your way and you have not issued a *ṭalāq*."

We shall now mention several quotes from Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī's great book, *Tadhkira al-Ḥuffāẓ*, in which he mentions the conditions of the Sufi shaykhs from among the *ḥuffāẓ* of hadith and hadith scholars (*Muhaddiths*), and in which there is also much mention of issues relating to Tasawwuf. We have sufficed with only this much without referring to the other books of Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī to ensure brevity.

1. Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī mentions in *Tadhkira al-Ḥuffāẓ* (part 2, p.761):

Al-Ḥīrī: The *ḥāfiẓ*, the ascetic, the exemplar (*qudwa*), the one whose supplications would be answered, Abū Ja'far Aḥmad ibn Ḥamdān ibn 'Alī ibn Sinān al-Nīsābūrī ... His son Abū 'Amr has narrated regarding him that in old age he travelled to

Mosul to meet Abū Yaʿlā to listen to the hadith of Muḥammad ibn ʿUbbād narrated from Ibn ʿUyayna. Abū Jaʿfar also travelled to Jurjān[50] to visit ʿImrān ibn Mūsā ibn Majāshiʿ to listen to the hadith regarding the changing of the *qibla*. Abū ʿAmr said: "My father would spend the nights awake."

His children were all ascetics and the son of his daughter, Shaykh Abū Bishr al-Ḥulwānī, was a unique individual of his era and the shaykh of the Ḥaram in Makkah; he died in 386 AH. Abū Jaʿfar died a few days before Ibn Khuzaymah in 311AH. Al-Sulamī said, "Abū Jaʿfar remained in the company of Abū Ḥafṣ al-Nīsābūrī and al-Shāh ibn Shujāʿ, and Junayd[51] would write to him. Abū ʿUthmān would say: 'Whosoever wishes to look at those who fear Allah then let him look at Abū Jaʿfar ﷺ.'"

2. Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī mentions in *Tadhkira al-Ḥuffāẓ* (part 3, p.852):

Ibn al-Aʿrābī: The Imām, the *ḥāfiẓ*, the ascetic, the shaykh of the Ḥaram in Makkah Abū Saʿīd Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ziyād ibn Bishr ibn Dirham al-Baṣrī al-Ṣūfī, the author of many books... He was reliable and meticulous [in narrating hadith], a knower of Allah (*ʿarif*), a man of devotion (*rabbānī*), and a person of great worth and good reputation.

Al-Sulamī said: "I heard Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Khashshāb who heard Ibn al-Aʿrābī say: 'Knowledge in essence lies in the acknowledgement of ignorance, Taṣawwuf in essence lies in the abandoning of that which is superfluous, asceticism (*zuhd*) in essence is the taking of only that which one cannot

50— Jurjān is situated east of the Caspian Sea in modern-day Iran. (IN)

51—These three are from the Imams of Taṣawwuf and the Sufi *shaykhs* ﷺ.

live without, the nature of dealing with others in essence is the usage of one thing at a time, *riḍā* (the state of satisfaction) in essence lies in not raising objections, and well being (*ʿāfiya*) in essence lies in the abandoning of affectatious behaviour (*takalluf*) without any affectation.'"

Among his books there is *Ṭabaqāt al-Nussāk* (*The Ranks of the Ascetics*). He remained in the company of Junayd and Abū Aḥmad al-Qalānisī and compiled a large book about the history of Basra. He wrote regarding al-Thawrī, "He died and people were saying such a thing about him that for them to have remained silent would have been better because it was a thing in which they were speculating and guessing. If this was the situation of those people, then what must the people that came after them be like."

He also said: "They speak regarding union with Allah (*jamʿ*); the manner of union according to each one is different to the other. This is also the case with annihilation *(fanāʾ)*. They agree on nomenclature and differ regarding the meaning; this is because what falls under the name cannot be limited because they are experiences. Likewise, the science of *maʿrifa* is something that cannot be encompassed, it has no ending, nor is there a limit to its existence and taste (*dhawq*)."

Ibn al-Aʿrābī continued, "When you hear a man asking about union and annihilation or he is one that answers questions regarding these two concepts, then know that he is idle and not one of those who possesses them. Those who possess them do not ask regarding them because they know they cannot be attained through descriptions."

Ibn al-Aʿrābī was born in 240 AH and died in Dhu al-Qaʿda 340 AH ﷺ.

3. Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī mentions in *Tadhkira al-Ḥuffāẓ* (part 3, p.901):

Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd ibn Sulaymān: The *ḥāfiẓ*, the ascetic, the *ḥujja* (authority), the shaykh of the Sufis, Abū Bakr al-Nīsābūrī. He heard hadith from Muḥammad ibn ʿAmr Qashmard, Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Būshanjī, Ibn al-Ḍurays, al-Nasā'ī and their like in Khurāsān, the Ḥijāz, the Levant, Egypt and Mosul. He wrote various chapters, stayed in the company of many shaykhs and dictated [hadith] for a lengthy time. Al-Ḥākim, Ibn Mandah, Ibn Jamīʿ, Abū Zakariyyā al-Muzakkī and others narrated from him. He was counted among the friends (*awliyā'*) of Allah. Al-Dāruquṭnī said he was reliable (*thiqa*) and erudite (*fāḍil*).

It is narrated from him that he said: "I ate, in the days of famine, one piece of bread for forty days in Basra. When I felt hungry I would recite *Surah Yāsīn* with the intention of filling my stomach."

Al-Khalīlī said: "He was renowned for his memory. His memory and knowledge is apparent in the useful commentaries that he dictated." He died in 342AH ﷺ.

4. Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī mentions in *Tadhkira al-Ḥuffāẓ* (part 3, p.961):

Ghundar: As to the third Ghundar,[52] he was a Sufi, a hadith expert (*muḥaddith*) and a person who would travel a lot. He met Junayd and the people of his ranking, wrote hadith and lived in Egypt. His full name was Shaykh Abu'l Ṭayyib Muḥammad ibn Jaʿfar ibn Durrān al-Baghdādī Ghundar. He narrated hadith from Abū Khalifa al-Jumaḥī, Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAbdullah

52— The first and second Ghundar were mentioned before.

al-Makhzūmī and Abū Yaʿlā al-Mūṣilī. Al-Dāruquṭnī, Abū Ḥafā al-Kattānī and a group of others narrated from him. He died in 357 AH.

5. Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī mentions in *Tadhkira al-Ḥuffāẓ* (part 1, p.245):

Fuḍayl ibn ʿIyāḍ:[53] The Imām, the exemplar, Shaykh al-Islam Abū ʿAlī al-Tamīmī al-Yarbūʿī al-Marwazī, the shaykh of the Ḥaram in Makkah… He lived in Makkah and was a devout, high-ranking and humble imam; he was reliable (*thiqa*) and of high standing…

Ibn al-Mubārak said, "There is none left on the face of the earth greater than Fuḍayl…" Ibn Saʿd said, "He was born in Khorasan, heard [hadith] in Kufa, and then devoted himself to worship and took up residence in Makkah. He was reliable, noble, erudite, a man of worship and of many hadiths…"

Hārūn al-Rashīd said, "From among the *ʿulamā'* I have never seen anyone more awe-inspiring than Mālik and none more God-fearing than Fuḍayl." Sharīk said, "There has always been for every people a person who can be considered to be the authority in religion (*ḥujja*) of that time. Fuḍayl ibn ʿIyāḍ was surely the authority for the people of his time."

Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ashʿath said, "I saw Ibn ʿUyayna twice kissing the hand of Fuḍayl ibn ʿIyāḍ."

6. Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī mentions in *Tadhkira al-Ḥuffāẓ* (part 2, p.640):

Ibn Abū ʿĀṣim: The great *Ḥāfiẓ* and Imām, Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn ʿAmr al-Nabīl Abū ʿĀṣim al-Shaybānī, the

53—The great Imām who is considered to be among the leaders of the great Sufi shaykhs; he was among the teachers of Imām al-Bukhari and others.

ascetic and *qāḍi* of Isfahan. He heard [hadith] from his maternal grandfather Abū Salama Al-Tabūdhakī, Abū al-Walīd Hadiyya ibn Khālid, Hishām ibn ʿAmmār, Azraq ibn ʿĀli and many others.

He travelled far and wide and wrote some beneficial books... It was said that he lost all his books in the Zanj revolt and recalled fifty thousand hadiths from memory.

Ibn al-Aʿrābī mentions in *Ṭabaqāt al-Nussāk*: "As to Ibn Abū ʿĀsim, I heard someone mention that he had memorized a thousand *fiqh* issues from Shaqīq al-Balkhī.[54] He was from among the *Ḥuffāẓ* of hadith. His *madhhab* involved acting on the literal meaning (*ẓāhir*) and abandoning analogy (*qiyās*)."

7. Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī mentions in *Tadhkira al-Ḥuffāẓ* (part 3, p.1016):

Al-Ṭūsī: Ḥāfiẓ Abū al-Faḍl Naṣr ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Yaʿqūb al-ʿAttār. He was the son of Abū Naṣr al-Ṭūsī... Al-Ḥākim said: "He is one of the pillars of hadith in Khorasan. He was known for his religiosity, asceticism, generosity and enthusiasm for the *Ahl al-Sunnah*. His first journey was to Marw[55] to Layth ibn Muḥammad. There was none like him the day he died in Ṭābarān.[56] He was an Imām in the knowledge of the Sufis and their stories and met many of their shaykhs. The

54— He is the shaykh of many shaykhs and from among the leaders of the great Sufi shaykhs ﷺ.

55— Marw or Marw al-Shāhidjān (also presently known as Merv) was a city on the north-eastern fringes of Persia. In medieval Islamic times, it was in the province of Khurāsān. The city, now in ruins, falls within Turkmenistan and is a UNESCO World Heritage site. (IN)

56— The town of Ṭabarān along with the neighbouring town of Nuqān made up Ṭūs, a city of Khorasan that is located close to Mashhad in present-day Iran. Tus was a bustling and prestigious city until its ruin at the hands of the Mongols in 1220CE. (IN)

day he died, he left none like him in Khorasan in being ahead [in spirituality] and in meeting [so many shaykhs]."

I say: He remained in the company of Shiblī[57] and died in Muharram 383AH.

8. Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī mentions in *Tadhkira al-Ḥuffāẓ* (part 3, p.1070):

Al-Mālīnī: The *ḥāfiẓ*, the *ʿālim*, the ascetic, Abū Saʿd Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdullah ibn Ḥafṣ al-Anṣārī al-Hirawī al-Mālīnī al-Ṣūfī. He is also known as the Peacock of the Poor (*ṭāwūs al-fuqarā'*)... He gathered and got hold of a huge amount [of hadiths] from the *masānīd*.[58] He was reliable and precise. He was a man of hadith and from among the great Sufis.

He is the author of *Arbaʿīn al-Ṣūfiyya*. Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbdul Ghanī, Imām al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥāzim al-ʿAbdawī, Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī, Abū Bakr al-Khaṭīb... and many others narrated from him.

Ḥamza al-Sahmī said, "Al-Mālīnī entered Jurjān in 364 AH and travelled widely to Isfahan, Transoxiana (*mā warā' al-nahr*), Egypt and the Hijaz." He then said he died in 409 AH. However, he has erred. Rather, he died in 412AH. Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ has mentioned him in *Ṭabaqāt al-Shafiʿiyya*.

9. Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī mentions in *Tadhkira al-Ḥuffāẓ* (part 3, p.1088):

ʿAṭiyyah ibn Saʿīd: The *ḥāfiẓ*, Shaykh al-Islam Abū Muḥammad al-Andalūsī al-Maghribī al-Qafsī al-Ṣūfī...

57— The great Sufi Imām ﷺ.

58— *Masānid* are those Hadiths that have been compiled according to their complete chains. (IN)

Al-Khaṭīb said, "He came to Baghdad and narrated from Ẓāhir al-Sarakhsī and ʿAlī ibn Ḥusayn al-Adhanī. Abu'l-Faḍl ibn al-Mahdī narrated to me from him and said, 'He was an ascetic. He would never lie down and would sleep by drawing his knees up and folding his arms around them.'"

He studied *Ṣaḥiḥ* hadiths in Transoxiana from Ismāʿīl ibn Ḥājib, the student of al-Fīrabrī and narrated them in Makkah. He heard [hadith] in Al-Andalus from Imām ʿAbdullah ibn Muḥammad al-Bājī,[59] and in al-Qayrawān[60] from ʿAbdullah ibn Khayrān and others like them. In this (the science of hadith) he did much and excelled.

Al-Ḥumaydī said, "He remained in Nishapur for some time. He was a Sufi who would remain in a state of *tawakkul* and giving preference to the needs of others. The companions of al-Sulamī would refer back to him."

ʿAbdul ʿAziz ibn Bundār al-Shīrāzī said, "I remained with him for a while in Baghdad. He was at a high level in terms of preferring others and generosity. He sufficed on wearing a sarong (*fūṭa*) and a heavily patched garment. He gathered many books that he carried on many Bactrian camels. I remained with him and we headed towards al-Yāsiriyya.[61] He only had with him his shawl, his small leather water bag and his heavily patched garment. I was surprised at his state. When

59— The name Bājī is attributed to the Andalusian city of Bāja, which is now located in the Alentejo region of modern Portugal and presently known as Beja. It fell under Muslim rule in 713 CE and remained so until it fell during the Reconquista in 1234 CE. The reputable Maliki expert, Shaykh Abū al-Walīd al-Bājī (1013-1081 CE) was also from Beja where he died. (IN)

60— Al-Qayrawān is also known as Kairouan and is situated in Tunisia. It was founded around 670CE and was an important centre of Islamic learning. (IN)

61— Al-Yāsiriyya was said to be a large village around six kilometres from Baghdad. (IN)

we reached the place, we began mingling with friends; we met a Khurāsānī shaykh who had an entourage around him. He said to us, "Come sit with us." He had food laid for us and we ate and left. This remained our condition, everyday we would chance on someone who would give us food and drink until we reached Makkah and we carried nothing. He narrated *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* in Makkah and would comment on the narrators and their condition; those who were present would be astonished. He died in Makkah in 408 AH or some time then."

Al-Ḥumaydī said, "He wrote a book on the permissibility of *Samāʿ* and many North Africans would avoid him on account of it. He wrote the chains of narration for the hadith about the helmet (*al-Mighfar*)[62] in several volumes. Abū Ghālib ibn Bishrān narrated to us from ʿAtiyyah from al-Qāsim ibn ʿAlqamah from Bahz who mentioned this hadith." He received widespread popularity in Nishapur and lived there for a time.

10. Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī mentions in *Tadhkira al-Ḥuffāẓ* (part 3, p.1092):

Abū Nuʿaym: The great *ḥāfiẓ*, hadith expert of the era, Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdullah ibn Aḥmad ibn Isḥāq ibn Mūsā ibn Mihrān al-Mihrānī al-Asbahānī al-Ṣūfī al-Aḥwal. He was the maternal grandson of the ascetic Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Bannā. He was born in 336 AH…

He was unique in the world in terms of the *ijāzas* (permission to transmit) that he possessed in the same way he was unique

62— The Hadith *al-mighfar* (or Hadith regarding the helmet) is the one describing the Conquest of Makkah when the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ entered Makkah wearing a helmet with a black turban tied around it. (IN)

in that he had heard [hadiths] from so many people. A huge number of *Ḥuffāẓ* of hadith travelled to his door due to his knowledge, memory and lofty chains of transmission (*isnād*)...

Al-Khaṭīb said, "I have not seen anyone who could be given the title *Ḥāfiẓ* save Abū Nuʿaym and Abū Hāzim al-ʿAbdawī."

ʿAlī ibn Faḍl al-Ḥāfiẓ said, "Our Shaykh al-Silafi[63] gathered details about Abū Nuʿaym and named around eighty individuals who he narrated from." He added, "The like of his book *Ḥilya al-Awliyā'* (*Descriptions of the Saints*) has not been written. We heard it, except a little portion, in the presence of Abū al-Muẓaffar al-Qāshānī who narrated it from him."

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Mardawayh said, "In his era, Abū Nuʿaym was a person towards whom people would travel. There was no one, in the remotest parts of the globe, with a stronger memory and stronger chains of narration than he. The *Ḥuffāẓ* of the world would gather by him, and each day it would be the turn of one of them to read what he desired until close to Ẓuhr. When he would stand to return to his home, they would at times recite a portion to him on the way and he would not become annoyed. For him there was no nourishment except to listen and write."

Ḥamza ibn al-ʿAbbās al-ʿAlawī said that the people of hadith would say, "For fourteen years Abū Nuʿaym remained without an equal. There was none loftier in *isnād* and stronger in memory than he in the east and the west." They would also say, "When Abū Nuʿaym had written the book *Ḥilya al-Awliyā'* he took during his lifetime to Nishapur where people bought it for four hundred dinars."

63— He is Hāfiẓ Abū Ṭāhir al-Silafi who wrote a biography of Hāfiẓ Abū Nuʿaym. (IN)

Imām Abū ʿAbdur Raḥmān al-Sulamī has narrated, in spite of his prowess, in his book *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣufiyya* (*The Sufi Rankings*), "ʿAbdul Wāḥid ibn Aḥmad al-Hāshimī has narrated to us from Abū Nuʿaym Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdullah from Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Jaysh in Baghdad. He then mentioned the hadith..."

Abū Nuʿaym has written many famous books such as *Maʿrifa al-Saḥāba*, *Dalāʾil al-Nubuwwa* (in two volumes), *al-Mustakhraj ʿala al-Bukhārī*, *al-Mustakhraj ʿala Muslim*, *Tārikh Asbahān*, *Ṣifa al-Jannah*, *Kitāb al-Ṭibb*, *Faḍāʾil al-Ṣaḥāba*, *al-Muʿtaqad* and some other small books...

Abū ʿAbdullah ibn Mandah has criticised Abū Nuʿaym due to difficulties of *madhhab* like many others. It is inappropriate to pay attention to that on account of what took place between the two. Abū Nuʿaym died at the age of 94 on 20 Muharram 430 AH. He, al-Burqāni, Abū Dharr and al-Ṣūrī are in the ninth ranking (*ṭabaqa*) from the forty rankings of Ibn al-Mufaḍḍal.

11. Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī mentions in *Tadhkira al-Ḥuffāẓ* (part 3, p.1162):

Al-Muʾadhdhin: Abū Ṣāliḥ ibn ʿAbdul Malik ibn ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad al-Nīsābūrī, the *Ḥāfiẓ* and hadith expert (*muḥaddith*) of his era in Khorasan. He heard [hadith from] Abū Naʿīm ʿAbdul Malik ibn al-Ḥasan al-Isfarāʾīnī, Abū al-Ḥasan al-ʿAlawi, Abū Yaʿlā al-Muhallibī, Abū Ṭāhir ibn Maḥmash, Ḥākim Abū ʿAbdullah and ʿAbdullah ibn Yūsuf al-Sahmī in Jurjān; Abū al-Qāsim ibn Bishrān in Baghdad; al-Mūsāddad al-Amlūkī in Damascus; Abū Nuʿaym al-Ḥafiz in Isfahan; Ḥasan ibn

al-Ashʿath in Manbij;[64] and Abū Dharr al-Hirawī in Makkah. He stayed in the company of Ustadh Abū ʿAlī al-Daqqāq and Aḥmad ibn Naṣr al-Ṭālaqānī and wrote a manuscript on the history of Marw...

ʿAbdul Ghāfir ibn Ismāʿil said in his *Tārikh* [*al-Nīsābūr*], "Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Muʾadhdhin. He was trustworthy, reliable, a hadith expert, a Sufi, and unique in his way and in gathering [of hadiths] and commenting [on them]. We have seen none like him in remembering the Qurʾān and collecting hadiths. He heard much and collected many chapters and [heard from many] shaykhs. He delivered the *adhān* for many years seeking reward in the world to come. He used to encourage me to learn hadiths and I have only been able to gather this history though his manuscripts and books, which have been referred to..."

Zāhid al-Shaḥḥāmī said, "Abū Ṣāliḥ narrated a thousand hadiths from a thousand shaykhs of his." Khaṭīb said, "Abū Ṣāliḥ has written from me and I have written from him and he is reliable."

Abū Saʿd al-Samʿānī said, "He was a Sufi, a *ḥāfiẓ*, precise and unique in his time in collecting and commenting [on hadiths]. He delivered the *adhān* for some time seeking reward in the hereafter, would deliver sermons at night and was appointed the shaykh of the Al-Madrasa al-Bayhaqiyya.[65] In his hands was the endowment (*waqf*) of books and chapters on hadith, the preservation of which he would continually maintain. He would take *ṣadaqa* from merchants and senior people and distribute to the needy."

64— Manbij is an ancient city in what is northern Syria today. (IN)

65— Al-Madrasa al-Bayhaqiyya was in Nīsāpūr, Khorasan. Imām al-Ghazālī also studied there. (IN)

Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-Muzakkī said, "No one is able to lie in hadith here while Abū Ṣāliḥ is alive." Abū al-Muẓaffar Manṣūr ibn al-Samʿānī said, "When you enter upon Abū Ṣāliḥ, then enter with reverence for he is the star of the age and a unique man of his time."

Abū Saʿd al-Samʿānī said, "Some saintly men saw Abū Ṣāliḥ in their dream the night he died and the Prophet ﷺ had taken him by his hand and said, 'May Allah reward you well on my behalf. How well you have stood firm for me and how well have you propagated my Sunnah.'"

ʿAbdul Ghāfir said, "He died on the seventh of Ramaḍān in 470 AH."

12. Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī mentions in *Tadhkira al-Ḥuffāẓ* (part 3, p.1170):

Al-Kattānī: The Imam, the hadith expert, he who benefited Damascus and its hadith experts, Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdul ʿAzīz ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Tamīmī al-Dimashqī al-Ṣūfī. He heard much, collected and retained. He annulled that which cannot be described due to its large quantity...

Ibn Mākūlā said, "He wrote from me and I wrote from him. He narrated a lot and was meticulous." Khaṭīb has written in *Fawā'id al-Nasab*, "He was reliable and trustworthy. Ibn al-Akfānī has described him as being truthful, steadfast, blameless in *madhhab* and a person who continually recited the Qur'ān. He narrated to me that he heard from his shaykh Abu'l Qāsim ʿUbayd Allah al-Azharī in Baghdad. I entered upon him at the time of his death and he said, 'I make you all witness

that I have given permission (*ijāza*) to all who are presently born in Islam.' A group, including Maḥfūẓ ibn Ṣa'rī al-Taghlibī, has narrated from him through this *ijaza*."

13. Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī mentions in *Tadhkira al-Ḥuffāẓ* (part 3, p.1183):

Shaykh al-Islam—the *ḥāfiẓ*, the Imām, the ascetic, Abū Ismā'il 'Abdullah ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn Ja'far ibn Manṣūr ibn Mut al-Anṣārī al-Hirawī was from the progeny of Abū Ayyub al-Anṣārī ...

Abū al-Naḍr al-Ghālī said, "Abū Ismā'īl was the unique individual of the age, the most precious jewel in a necklace of individuals with qualities that are commended, and the figure of attention in many different traits of virtue and merits that included aiding the religion and the Sunnah without any compromise or consideration for any sultan or vizier. He had to, on account of this, endure at all times the designs of envious individuals who often strove to get at his soul and were at times intent on destroying him. Allah saved him from their wickedness and made their schemes the strongest means in raising his rank."

A large amount of people studied under him, and for a long period of time he explained the Qur'ān and its many virtues. I have seen the Ahl al-Ittiḥād[66] venerating his words in *Manāzil al-Sā'irīn* and claiming that he is in agreement with them, has tasted their *wajd* (ecstasy) and has indicated towards their corrupt Taṣawwuf. How can that be when he is from

66— The Ahl al-Ittiḥād (or People of Union) was a group of heretical Sufis who believed in the doctrine of *ittiḥād* (or union with Allah). (IN)

among the inviters to the Sunnah and that group who were the remnants of the *salaf*? There is no doubt that there are some things in *Manāzil al-Sā'irīn* from the station of obliteration (*maḥw*) and annihilation (*fanā'*). His meaning of *fanā'* is a sense of oblivion from seeing anything apart from He and not the absence of Him on the outside. In sum, this book is of a different type and not on the pattern that the Sufis who came after applauded and which the devout hadith experts treaded. Allah guides who He wishes to the straight path...

Al-Silafī said, "I asked al-Mu'taman regarding Abū Ismā'īl al-Anṣarī. He said, 'He was, from among the great *'ulama*, a wonder in delivering orations and in Taṣawwuf. He heard in Baghdad from Abū Muḥammad al-Khallāl and others. He would narrate in his gatherings hadiths along with the chains of transmission and would forbid from narrating from him. He was proficient in classical Arabic, a *Ḥāfiẓ* of hadith..."

'Abd al-Ghāfir ibn Ismā'īl said, "He knew Arabic, hadith, history and genealogy very well. He was a perfect Imām in *Tafsir*, of excellent conduct in Taṣawwuf, and someone who would not preoccupy himself in earning and would suffice that which the *murīds* and followers from his gatherings would give, once or twice a year, with him leading the gathering. He would gain thousands of dinars and many sets of clothes and jewelery, which he would take and distribute to butchers and bakers. He would spend from that and not take anything from sultans and the people of state. He would hardly refer to them and not bother with them. He remained respected, accepted more than the king and remained obeyed for around sixty years without any rivalry. When he would attend a gathering he would wear splendid clothes, mount an expensive mount and

say, 'I only do this to give esteem to the religion and in spite of its enemies so they may see my esteem and adornment and desire Islam.' When he would return home, he would return to patched clothing and sit with the Sufis in the *khānqāh*,[67] he would eat with them and would not set himself apart in any way. It was from him that the people of Herat took the performance of the Fajr at its beginning time and the oft naming of their children with *ʿabd* adjoined to one of the names of Allah Most High."

Abū Saʿd al-Samʿānī said, "He was someone who was the manifestation of the Sunnah, called towards it and encouraged it. He would suffice with that amount that would please the *murīds*. He would not take anything that was earned through oppressive means and he would not exceed the limit unjustly. He would not exceed the limit in considering general the apparent meaning (*ẓāhir*) from the Book and the Sunnah. He would believe in that which is authentic without explaining what the allegory (*tashbīḥ*) entails. He said, 'He who has not seen my gathering and my delivering of advice and then criticises me, then I have no bother with him.'

Abū al-Naḍr al-Fāmī said, "Abū Ismāʿīl died in Dhu al-Hijjah 481 AH at the age of over 84 years."

14. Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī mentions in *Tadhkira al-Ḥuffāẓ* (part 3, p.1183):

Al-Yūnīnī: The shaykh, the jurist (*faqīh*), the *Ḥāfiẓ* of hadith, the *Imām*, the exemplar, Taqī al-Dīn Abū ʿAbdullah Muḥammad

67— A *khānqāh* is a building designed specifically for Sufi gatherings. It is a place for spiritual retreat and character reformation. The word is from Persian and is synonymous with the Arabic words *zāwiya* or *ribāṭ*. (IN)

ibn Abū al-Ḥasan Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdullah ibn ʿĪsa ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Baʿlabakkī al-Ḥanbalī. He was born in the year 572 in Younine.[68] He donned the mantle (*khirqa*) from Shaykh ʿAbdullah al-Baṭāʾihī, the companion of Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir.[69] He remained in the company of Shaykh ʿAbdullah al-Yūnīnī and learned *Fiqh* from Shaykh al-Muwaffaq[70] and excelled in the *al-khaṭṭ al-mansūb* style of calligraphy. He heard from Abū Ṭāhir al-Khashūʾī, Abū al-Tamām al-Qalānisī, Ḥanbal al-Raṣāfi, Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbdul Ghanī, Abū al-Yūmn al-Kindī and others...

His father was a marble-cutter in Baalbek[71] and then in Damascus. He died and the *faqīh* grew up as an orphan in Kishk with his mother who handed him over to an arrow-maker. He then memorised the Qurʾān and excelled in calligraphy. He then memorized al-Ḥumaydī's *Al-Jamʿ bayn al-Ṣaḥiḥayn* in its entirety. Ḥāfiẓ ʿUmar ibn al-Ḥājib has mentioned him, and exerted himself in describing him, went to great lengths, and wrote in an extraordinary fashion and intelligibly, "He remained preoccupied with *Fiqh* and hadith until he became an *Imām* and a *ḥāfiẓ*... his like in perfection, proficiency and gathering the two sciences of Sharīʿa and Ḥaqīqa was not seen in his era. He was of excellent character and appearance, someone who was of benefit to people and a rejecter of affectation. Among that which he had memorized was al-Ḥumaydī's *Al-Jamʿ bayn al-Ṣaḥiḥayn*. He told me that he had memorized the

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68— Younine is a village in the Baalbek region of modern day Lebanon. (IN)

69— He is the devout Imām and *quṭub* Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir al-Jīlānī to whom all of the Qādiri chains of Ṭaṣawwuf return to.

70— Shaykh al-Muwaffaq was none other than Imām Ibn Qudāma al-Maqdisī, the reputed scholar of the Ḥanbalī *madhhab* and author of *al-Mughnī*, a popular treatise in Ḥanbalī *fiqh*. He was born in Palestine in 541 AH and died in Damascus. (IN)

71— Baalbek is a town in the Bekaa Valley of Lebanon. (IN)

complete *Ṣaḥiḥ Muslim* and repeated it over four months. He would repeat the majority of *Musnad Aḥmad* from memory and would memorize over seventy hadiths in one sitting."

His son Quṭub al-Dīn said, "He memorized al-Ḥumaydī's *Al-Jamᶜ bayn al-Ṣaḥiḥayn*, and memorized *Ṣaḥiḥ Muslim* in four months. He memorised *Surah al-Anᶜām* in a day and three odes from *Maqāmāt al-Ḥarīrī* in a portion of a day. Al-Ashraf[72] used to respect him and venerate him, and likewise his brother al-Ṣāliḥ.[73] Towards the latter part of his life he came to Damascus and al-Nāṣir Yūsuf[74] came to see him at Zāwiya al-Faranthiyya[75] and allowed himself to be guided by him."

The shaykh and the *faqīh* was a person of great worth and is remembered for many miracles and [attaining] spiritual states (*aḥwāl*). The people of Baalbek would listen to him reciting upon those shaykhs who would visit them such as al-Qazwīnī, al-Bahā' al-Maqdisī and Ibn Rawāḥa al-Ḥamawī. I have mentioned details about him and his companions in *Tārikh al-Islām*. He died on 19 Ramaḍān in 658 AH.

15. Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī mentions in *Tadhkira al-Ḥuffāẓ* (part 4, p.1356):

Al-Shīrāzī: The Imām, the *Ḥāfiẓ* of hadith, the abundant traveller Abū Yaᶜqūb Yūsuf ibn Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhim al-Ṣūfī, he

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72— Al-Ashraf Mūsā Abū al-Fatḥ al-Muẓaffar al-Dīn (d. 1237CE) was a ruler of the Ayyubid dynasty. (IN)

73— 'Imād al-Dīn al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ Ismāᶜīl ibn Sayf al-Dīn Aḥmad was the Ayyubid ruler based in Damascus in 1237CE and then in 1239-45CE. He succeeded his brother al-Ashraf. (IN)

74— Al-Malik al-Nāṣir Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Yūsuf (d.1260CE) was the last of the Ayyubid rulers and a great grandson of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī. (IN)

75— Zāwiya Faranthiyya, built in 621 AH at the foot of Mount Qassioun, is attributed to Shaykh 'Alī al-Faranthī. (IN)

who benefited Baghdad, the shaykh of the Sufis at the Ribāṭ al-Arjuwāniyya[76] and author of *Al-Arbaʿīn al-Baladiyya*... He wrote *Al-Arbaʿīn* in an excellent manner and was distinguished for his memory. He undertook some far journeys and was honest and reliable. Abu'l Mawāhib, the *ḥāfiẓ*, has written from him. Ibn al-Dubaythī said he was reliable. He was eloquent and sharp in response. He gained nearness to the state and he went as a messenger on behalf of the *khalīfa* to other lands; his rank raised and his wealth increased. He narrated a small portion, which we have permission to narrate. He died in Ramaḍān 585 AH middle-aged at the beginning of old age.

16. Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī mentions in *Tadhkira al-Ḥuffāẓ* (part 3, p.1183):

And it is here that the *Kitāb al-Tadhkira* brings us. There may be among those whom we have not included, due to neglect or forgetfulness, some who are—in knowledge and memory—of the caliber of those who have been mentioned. I had compiled a biographical dictionary focusing on those of my shaykhs and colleagues who sought this (the science of hadith). I even included those who have contributed the least work and wrote about them...

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76— A *ribāṭ*, in this context, is a building designed specifically for Sufi gatherings. It is a place for spiritual retreat and character reformation. It is synonymous with the words *zāwiya* and *khānqāh*. (IN)

Al-Dhahabī then mentions only his shaykhs from among these individuals. We shall mention only three of the author's shaykhs here because of their connection to the subject matter. Al-Dhahabī writes:

(Second,) I remained close (*lazimtu*) to the shaykh, the Imām, the hadith expert, he who benefited the group Abu'l Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Masʿūd ibn Nafīs al-Mūṣilī.[77] I heard from him a large amount. He was devout, good, a Sufi (*mutaṣawwif*) and someone who abstained from what is unlawful. He read that which cannot be described due to it being so much. He acquired many original manuscripts; he would remain hungry and purchase them. He heard [hadith] in Egypt and the Levant and lived for seventy years. He died in 704 AH. Half a volume that he heard from Abu'l Qāsim ibn Rawāḥa came to light.

(Third,) I heard from he who benefited students, the hadith expert, the Imām, he who was precise, the lexicographer, Ṣafī al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Abū Bakr al-Armawī, then al-Qurāfī al-Ṣūfī. He read much upon the shaykhs. He was eloquent and erudite. He wrote a lot and focused on this matter (hadith). He excelled in Arabic and authored [books]. He narrated to us from *Najīb* al-Ḥarrānī and Kamāl ibn ʿAbd. He died [at the age of] over seventy in 723AH. May Allah Most High have mercy on him.

(Fourth,) I heard from the Imām, the unique and perfect hadith expert Fakhr al-Islām Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Muʾayyad ibn Ḥamwayh al-Khurāsānī al-Juwaynī,

77— This is the only shaykh from the shaykhs of Hāfiẓ al-Dhahabī regarding whom he has mentioned that he remained close to him (*lazimahu*). As to the rest of the *shaykhs*, he mentions that he only heard from them.

the shaykh of the Sufis. He came to us seeking hadith and related to us from two of the companions of al-Mu'ayyad al-Ṭūsī. He was extremely careful in narrating and collecting volumes; he was of beautiful voice in recitation, handsome, awe inspiring, devout and pious. Ghāzān al-Malik[78] accepted Islam at his hand.

He died in 722 AH at the age of 78 years ﷺ.

We have sufficed here by only quoting what Imām Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī has mentioned in his excellent book *Tadhkira al-Ḥuffāẓ*, so that it may be known that the senior *Ḥuffāẓ* of the noble hadiths also included many shaykhs of Taṣawwuf. Whatever the situation may be, these individuals had shaykhs and students, and criticizing them would lead to critizising their shaykhs and students from among the *Ḥuffāẓ* of hadiths and masters of the Prophet's Sunnah, ﷺ.

I have also noted that the likes of Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī also had a number of shaykhs from the Sufis. In fact, he has not mentioned regarding any of them that he "remained in his company" (*lazimahu*) but also said that the person was "devout, good, a Sufi (*mutaṣawwif*) and upright."

Likewise, it can be noted how he mentions the Sufi shaykhs: "These are only some examples which we have presented here.

78— Maḥmuūd Ghāzān (1271CE–1304CE) was the seventh ruler of the Mongol Empire's Ilkhanate division in modern-day Iran from 1295CE to 1304CE. He was the son of Arghun and Quthluq Khatun, continuing a line of rulers who were direct descendants of Ghengis Khan. He converted to Islam in 1295CE. (IN)

The majority of his books are full of the likes of that which we have mentioned." You can see his pen flowing in mentioning their outstanding virtues and remarkable miracles, and in extolling admiration and praise for them.

You can also notice from his words and literary style that he is a man who has deep love and affection for the Community. His example is that of the majority of the *ʿulamā'* of Islam in regards to this.

This is also what you will notice with regards to Imām ʿImād al-Dīn Ibn Kathīr,[79] may Allah through his favor and grace have mercy on them all, be pleased with them, benefit us and the Muslims with their knowledge, and enlighten all our hearts with the light of *īmān* and *maʿrifa*, for indeed He Most High is kind and generous.

79— The next chapter is dedicated to Imām Ibn Kathīr. (IN)

IMĀM ḤĀFIẒ

ABŪ AL-FIDĀ' ʿIMĀD AL-DĪN ISMĀʿĪL IBN KATHĪR

AL-DIMASHQĪ AL-SHĀFIʿĪ

1. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr mentions in *Al-Bidāya w'al-Nihāya*[80] (part 11, p. 180) regarding those eminent individuals who died in 322AH:

Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Qāsim Abū ʿAlī al-Rūdhbārī: It is said his name was Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad and also said [that his name was] al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Humām; the first is correct. He was originally from Baghdad and lived in Egypt. He was from the offspring of leaders, viziers and learned men.

He remained in the company of Junayd,[81] heard hadith [from him] and memorized much from him; he learned *Fiqh* from

80— Published by Maktaba al-Riyāḍ al-Ḥadīthiyya, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

81— He is the great shaykh of the Sufis who known by them and others as *sayyid al-ṭā'ifa* (master of the Sufis).

Ibrāhīm al-Ḥarbī and Naḥw from Thaʿlab. He would give plenty of *ṣadaqa* and charity to the poor. When he would give something to the poor, he would place his palm below the person's hand and the person would take. He wished that the hand of the poor did not come below his hand.

Abū Nuʿaym said: "Abū ʿAlī al-Rūdhbārī was asked regarding the person who listens to musical instruments and says that he has reached a station in which the changing of situations does not have an effect. Al-Rūdhbārī responded, 'Yes, he has reached. However, that is to hell…' He also said: 'Surely, those who are desirous of Allah find the sweetness of [their] desire—at the time when the essence of connecting to His proximity (*qurb*) is revealed to them—sweeter than honey…' He also said: 'In earning the world lies the disgracing of souls, and in earning the hereafter is its honor. How strange is that person who opts for disgrace in seeking that which shall perish over honor in seeking that which shall remain?"

Among his poems there is the following:

There is no wonder if all of that (wealth) which I have was to go,
Wonder is only in that small amount—how did it remain behind?

Take hold of the remainder of your soul which has become ruined,
Before separation comes, for this is the last breath.

Among those eminent individuals who died in 332 AH there was:

Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl: He was popularly known as Khayr al-Nassāj (Khayr the Weaver) Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Ṣūfī; he was from among the major shaykhs who were of excellent spiritual states (*ḥāl*) and known for famous miracles (*karāmāt*). He met

Sarrī al-Saqaṭī and others from the shaykhs of the community. He lived a hundred and twenty years. When the time of his demise came, he looked at the corner of the house and said: "Stop, may Allah have mercy on you, for you're a slave who has been given an order and I am also a slave who has been given an order. That which you have been ordered to do shall not pass whereas that which I have been ordered to do will pass." He then stood up, performed ablution, offered prayer, layed down and passed away—may Allah have mercy on him. Some people later saw him in a dream and asked him: "What did Allah do with you?" he replied: "We gained respite from your wicked world."

2. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr mentions in *Al-Bidāya w'al-Nihāya* (part 11, p. 334) regarding events that occurred in 394 AH. After mentioning some amazing stories regarding the *qārīʾīn* (reciters of the Qurʾān), he writes:

When those two *qurrāʾ* returned, the ruler assigned them to Abū Bakr ibn al-Bahlūl, who was also an excellent *qārī*, so they may lead the people in the *Tarāwīḥ* prayers in Ramaḍān. The crowd behind them was large on account of their beautiful recitation. They would also lengthen the prayer a lot and would take turns in leading. They would recite thirty verses in each *rakaʿa*. People would not leave the *Tarāwīḥ* save when a third of the night had passed or close to the middle of the night. Ibn al-Bahlūl one day, in the Al-Manṣūr Jāmiʿ Masjid, recited the verse: *"Has the time not yet come for those who believe that their hearts should be humble for the remembrance of Allah and for the truth that has descended (through revelation)?"* (57:16),

when a Sufi stood up. He was swaying and said: "What did you say?" Ibn al-Bahlūl repeated the verse and the Sufi said: "Why not? I swear by Allah." He then fell dead, may Allah have mercy on him.

Ibn al-Jawzī said: "A similar incident occurred to Abū al-Ḥasan ibn al-Khashshāb Shaykh Ibn al-Raffā', who was a student of Abū Ibn al-Adamī who has been mentioned earlier. He was also excellent in reciting the Qur'ān and had a beautiful voice. This Ibn al-Khashshāb recited, in the Jāmi' Masjid of the al-Ruṣāfa district, this verse: *'Has the time not yet come for those who believe ...'* (57:16), when a Sufi went into ecstasy (*wajd*) and said: 'Why not? The time has come.' He sat and cried for a long time, and then became silent. He had died. May Allah have mercy on him."

3. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr mentions in *Al-Bidāya w'al-Nihāya* (part 11, p. 84) regarding events that occurred in 287 AH:

Among those who died this year was Abū Bakr ibn Abū 'Āṣim, the man of Sunnah and [author] of many books. He was Aḥmad ibn Abū 'Āṣim al-Daḥḥāk ibn Mukhlad al-Nabīl. He has many books in hadith, including the book *Al-Sunnah* in relation to the hadiths containing the attributes of Allah according to the way of the predecessors. He was a Ḥāfiẓ of hadith and in charge of the judiciary in Isfahan after Ṣāliḥ ibn Aḥmad. He visited many lands before that in search of hadith and stayed in the company of Abū Turāb al-Nakhshābī and other Sufi shaykhs.

An astonishing miracle (*karāma*) once occurred to him. He, along with two major pious men, was in a journey when they

descended on some white sand. Abū Bakr began kissing the sand with his hand and said: "Oh Allah grant us some *khabīṣ*[82] that can be our lunch and let it be the color of this sand." It had hardly been uttered when a Bedouin came with a dish within which was *khabīṣ* the color of that white sand. They then ate it.

He used to say: "I do not want an innovator, or one who makes false allegations, or a slanderer, or one who curses, or one who uses obscene language, or one who is abusive, or one who has digressed from al-Shāfiʿī and the people of hadith to attend my gatherings."

He died this year in Isfahan. Some of them saw him after his death and he was offering *salah*. When he finished they asked: "What did Allah do with you?" He said, "My Cherisher Most High was friendly to me."

4. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr mentions in *Al-Bidāya w'al-Nihāya* (part 11, p. 97) regarding events that occurred in 290 AH:

[Among those notables who died this year there was] Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdullah Abū Bakr al-Daqqāq.[83] He was one of the Sufi Imāms and heavy worshippers from among them. He narrates regarding Junayd that he said: "I saw Satan in a dream and it was as if he was naked. So I said: 'Don't you have any shame before the people?' He replied: 'These people? I play with them as a child plays with a ball. The real people are a group apart from them.' So I asked: 'Who are they?' He

82— Khabīṣ is a type of sweet dish made using flour. Several versions of this dish are mentioned in Ibn Sayyār al-Warrāq's 10th century cookery book *Al-Kitāb al-Ṭabikh*. It seems that Khabīṣ al-Jazr (*khabīṣ* made from carrots) is the classic Indo-Pak carrot *halwa*. (IN)

83— In some versions it is al-Zaqqāq. (IN)

said: 'They're a people in the Masjid al-Shūnīzī. They have weakened my heart and exhausted my body. Each time I target them, they signal unto Allah and it is close that I might be burned.'" Junayd said: "When I woke up, I dressed and went to the mosque that he mentioned. In it were three men who were sitting and their heads were [lowered] in their tattered clothes. One of them raised his head towards me and said: 'Oh Abu'l-Qāsim, do not be deceived by the words of the wicked.' They were Abū Bakr al-Daqqāq, Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Nūrī and Abū Ḥamza.

5. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr mentions in *Al-Bidāya w'al-Nihāya* (part 11, p. 113) regarding events that occurred in 298 AH:

[Among those notables who died in this year, there was] al-Junayd ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Junayd, Abu'l-Qāsim al-Khazzāz. He was also called al-Qawārīrī. His origins were in Nahavand; he was born in Baghdad where he was also raised. He heard hadith from Ḥusayn ibn ʿArafa. He studied *Fiqh* from Abū Thawr Ibrāhīm ibn Khālid al-Kalbī and would issue *fatwas* in his presence when he was twenty years old. We have mentioned him in *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiʿiyya*. He became famous for remaining in the company of al-Hārith al-Muḥāsibī and his maternal uncle Sarrī al-Saqaṭī. He would remain firmly in worship and so Allah opened up for him, on account of that, much knowledge. He would speak of the way (*ṭarīqa*) of the Sufis. Offering three hundred *rakaʿāt* of prayer and thirty thousand *tasbīḥ* was part of his daily *wird*. For forty years he did not retire to bed and thus such beneficial

knowledge and pious acts opened to him that was not attained by others from his era.

He used to know all types of knowledge. When he would take a subject, then there would be no opportunity for him to stop or stumble until he would say regarding one issue many different points which had not occurred to the *'ulamā'*. This was also the case with *Taṣawwuf* etc. When death came close, he began to offer prayer and recite the Qur'ān. It was said to him: "Why don't you be gentle with yourself at a time like this?" He replied: "There is none more in need of this than me at this moment. This is the time of the folding of my book [of deeds]."

Ibn Khallikān said: "He took *Fiqh* from Abū Thawr. It was said that he learned *Fiqh* according to the *madhhab* of Sufyān al-Thawri. Ibn Surayj would remain in his company and study by him. At times he benefitted from him in issues of *Fiqh* that had not occurred to him. It was said that he once asked him regarding an issue and he gave numerous answers. So Ibn Surayj said: 'Oh Abu'l-Qāsim, I only knew in this matter three answers from those that you mentioned. Repeat them to me.' So he mentioned some more answers apart from them. So Ibn Surayj said: 'I have never heard the like of this. Dictate them to me so I can write them down.' So Junayd said: 'If it was coming from me then I would dictate it.' Meaning that it is surely Allah who allows it to flow on my heart and my tongue speaks it. This is not gained from books or from learning. This is only through the grace of Allah Most High. He inspires me with it and allows it to flow from my tongue. So Ibn Surayj said: 'From where did you learn this knowledge?' He replied: 'Through my sitting in front of Allah for forty years.' What is

correct is that he was on the *madhhab* of Sufyān al-Thawrī and his way, and Allah knows best.

Ibn Khallikān said: "Junayd was asked regarding the *ʿārif*, he said: 'Who speaks regarding your secret while you remain quiet.' He also said: 'This way of ours is bound by the Book and the Sunnah. He who does not read the Qur'ān and writes hadith should, according to our *madhhab* and way, not be followed.' Some of them saw him with prayer beads (*misbaḥa*), so it was said to him: 'You, in spite of your nobility, carry prayer beads?' He replied: 'I shall not leave the way by which I reached Allah.'

"His maternal uncle Sarrī al-Saqaṭī once said to him: 'Preach to the people.' He would, however, not see himself in the position [to do so]. In a dream he saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who told him: 'Preach to the people.' In the morning he went to his uncle who said to him: 'Why didn't you listen to me and now it is that the Messenger of Allah has had to tell you.' He then preached to the people."

Ibn Khallikān said: "One day a Christian youth, in the appearance of a Muslim, came to him and said: 'Oh Abu'l-Qāsim, what is the meaning of the saying of the Prophet ﷺ: Fear the insight (*firāsa*) of a believer for he sees with the light of Allah?' Junayd lowered his head and then raised it and said: 'Become a Muslim, it is time you became one.'" Ibn Khallikān said that the youth accepted Islam.

Junayd said: "I have never benefitted from anything in the way I have benefitted from these couplets which I heard from a slave girl who sang them in a room. She said:

When I say: Abandoning [of others for your love]
has given me threadbare clothes,

You will say: If there was no abandoning [of others]
then love would not be pleasant,

And if I were to say: This heart, passion has burned it,
You will say: Surely passion is the honor of the heart,

And if I were to say: What sin have I committed? She would say,
Your life is such a sin that no other sin can compare with it.

Junayd said: "I became stunned and screamed. So the owner of the house came out and said: 'Oh master, what has befallen you?' I said: 'It happened on account of what I heard.' He said: 'She is a gift from me to you.' So I said: 'I accept and she is free for the sake of Allah.' I then married her to a man, and she gave birth to a pious son who performed the Hajj thirty times on foot."

6. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr mentions in *Al-Bidāyā w'al-Nihāya* (part 11, p. 192) regarding events that occurred in 328 AH:

From among those notables who died this year was Abū Muḥammad Jaʿfar al-Murtaʿish, he was one of the shaykhs of the Sufis, as mentioned by al-Khaṭīb. Abū ʿAbdur Raḥmān al-Sulamī said: "His name was ʿAbdullah ibn Muḥammad Abū Muḥammad al-Nīsābūrī. He was a man of wealth which he relinquished and adopted the company of Junayd, Abū Ḥafṣ and Abū ʿUthmān. He remained in Baghdad until he became a shaykh of the Sufis. It used to be said: The wonders of Baghdad are three: the allusions (*ishārāt*) of al-Shiblī, the expressions of al-Murtaʿish and the stories of Jaʿfar al-Khawwāṣ."

I heard Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṣāʾigh say that al-Murtaʿish said: "Whoever thinks his actions shall save him from the fire or take him to Allah's pleasure (*riḍwān*), then he has placed his self and actions in danger. And he who places trust in the bounty of Allah, then Allah will take him to the utmost stations of His pleasure."

It was said to al-Murtaʿish: "Such a person treads on water." He replied: "Surely, disobeying the desires is greater than walking on water and flying in the air." When his death came nigh at the Masjid al-Shūnīziyya,[84] they calculated his debts which amounted to seventeen dirhams. He said: "Sell these tattered clothes of mine and pay them off with that. I have hope in Allah that He will grant me a shroud. I have surely asked Allah for three: that He grants me death as a poor person, grants me death in this mosque for I have remained in the company of the people within it, and places me with those who I am friendly with and whom I love." He then closed his eyes and died.

7. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr mentions in *Al-Bidāya w'al-Nihāya* (part 11, p. 193) regarding events that occurred in 328 AH:

[From among those notables who died there was also] ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad, Abū 'l-Ḥasan al-Muzayyin al-Saghīr. He was one of the shaykhs of the Sufis. He was originally from Baghdad and remained in the company of Junayd and Sahl al-Tustarī. He resided in Makkah until his death this year. He would say regarding himself: "I came to a well in the land of

84— According to the *Muʿjam al-Buldān* (*The Dictionary of Countries*), al-Shūnīziyya is a cemetery in the east of Baghdad and the resting ground of a group of pious people. (IN)

Tabūk. When I drew close to it, I slipped and fell into it and there was none who saw me. When I reached the bottom, there was a stone bench [on the side] that I clung to. I said, 'If I die then I shall end up ruining the water for people.' My soul then became restful and it started to yearn for death. I was in this condition when a serpent descended upon me and wound itself around me. It then raised me to land and slithered away. I knew not where it went and from where it came."

Among the other shaykhs of the Sufis there is one who is called Abū Jaʿfar al-Muzayyin al-Kabīr who resided in Makkah and also died there. He was among those known for their worship. Al-Khaṭīb has narrated from ʿAlī ibn Abū ʿAlī Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī from Jaʿfar al-Khuldī who said: "I bade farewell to Muzayyin al-Kabīr when leaving for some of my Hajj pilgrimages and said to him, 'Provide me with some provisions.' He told me: 'When you lose something, say: O He Who will assemble all people on the day about which there is no doubt. Surely, Allah does not back out of His promise. Join me with whatever it is [that you have lost]. Surely Allah will join you with that thing.' He also said: 'I went to al-Kattānī and bade him farewell and asked him to provide me with some provisions. He gave me a ring on whose stone was an inscription. He then said: "When you are in distress then look at this stone, your distress will be removed." I would supplicate with this prayer and it would surely be accepted and I would surely look at this stone and that feeling would go. Once, when I was in a ship, there was a severe wind, so I took out the ring to look at it. However, I had no idea where it went. So I began supplicating using that supplication for the entire day. When

I returned home, I searched my belongings at home and found the ring in some clothes which had been in the house.'"

8. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr mentions in *Al-Bidāya w'al-Nihāya* (part 13, p. 93) regarding events that occurred in 617 AH:

[From among those notables who died this year was] Shaykh ʿAbdullah al-Yūnīnī who was given the title, The Lion of the Levant (*Asad al-Shām*), may Allah have mercy on him and be pleased with him. He was from a village in Baalbek called Younine. He had a *zāwiya* which people would travel to and visit. He was from among the major pious individuals, and famous for worship, spiritual exercises (*riyāḍa*), and commanding good and forbidding vice. He was very high-minded in terms of his asceticism and piety in that he would not keep anything for himself; he did not have wealth or clothes, but would borrow what he wore. He would not wear more than one tunic (*qamīṣ*) during the summer and would wear a fur overcoat over it during the winter. He would wear a cap made from goatskin, the hair of which would be on the outside.

He would never remain behind from participating in battles. He would shoot a bow that weighed eighty *raṭl*.[85] He would sometimes live in the mountains of Lebanon. He would, in the winter, come to the springs of al-ʿĀsiriyyā at the foot of the mountain overlooking the village of Douma situated to the east of Damascus on account of the warmth of the water. People

85— The *raṭl* is a unit of weight used in many Muslim lands. The *raṭl* varies in weight. According to J. G. Hava's *Classical Arabic-English Dictionary*, one *raṭl* is the weight of 5 lbs in Syria and 15 ¾ oz in Egypt. South Asians often use the word to denote the imperial pound. (IN)

would, hence, head for him there to meet him. He would at times come to Damascus and stay at the foot of Mount Qasioun close to al-Qādisiyya. He was of [high] spiritual states (*aḥwāl*) and of righteous *kashf*. He was called the Lion of the Levant.

Abu'l-Muẓaffar, the maternal grandson of Ibn al-Jawzī has narrated from Qāḍī Jamāl al-Dīn Yaʿqūb, the governor of Al-Karak al-Biqāʿ, that he once saw Shaykh ʿAbdullah performing ablution in the River Tawra close to the Jisr al-Abyad (the White Bridge) when a Christian passed by him and with him was a mule carrying wine. "The animal stumbled on the bridge and the load fell. He then saw the shaykh who had finished his *wuḍū'* and who he did not know. He asked him for help to raise the load on to the animal so the shaykh called me and said: 'Come here oh *faqīh*, help us place this load on the animal.' The Christian then left. I became astonished by this and followed the animal as I was heading to the city. The Christian took it to the ʿAqaba [district] and went to a seller of wine there where it became clear that it had suddenly turned into vinegar. The wine seller then said to the Christian: 'Woe unto you. This is vinegar.' So the Christian said: 'I know where this has come from.' He tied his animal in a rest house and returned to a group of pious people. He asked regarding the shaykh and came to know of him. He then came to him and accepted Islam at his hands."

He was a man of many spiritual states and miracles. He would stand for no one who entered on him and would say, "People only stand for the Cherisher of the Worlds." When al-Amjad[86] would visit him, he would sit in front of him.

86— Al-Amjad was the grand nephew of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī ﷺ and governor of Baalbek between 1182 and 1230. (IN)

The shaykh would then say to him: "Oh al-Amjad, you did this and you did that." He would then command that which he needed to command him to do and forbid him from that which he ought to forbid him from. Al-Amjad would obey all that he would say to him and that was only on account of the shaykh's sincerity in asceticism, piety and way.

He would accept the spoils of war and would not keep any of it for the next day. When his hunger became severe, he would take the leaves from an almond tree, which he would rub and press and then eat till his fill. He would then drink cold water on top of this. May Allah Most High have mercy on him and make pleasant his resting place.

They mention that he completed the Hajj some years in the air [by flying]. This has happened to a large group of ascetics and pious worshippers. This has not reached us regarding any of the major scholars. The first regarding whom this is mentioned is Ḥabīb al-ʿAjamī, who was from among the companions of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, and then some pious individuals after him—may the mercy of Allah Most High be on all of them.

On Friday, 10 Dhu al-Hijjah of this year, ʿAbdullah al-Yūnīnī offered the morning prayer and the Friday prayer at the Jāmiʿ Masjid of Baalbek. It is correct that he had visited the lavatory that day before the prayer. After completing the prayer he said to Shaykh Dāwūd al-Muʾadhdhin who would wash the dead: "See how you will be tomorrow." The shaykh then began to ascent towards his *zāwiya* and spent that night awake in the *dhikr* of Allah Most High. He remembered his friends and those who were good to him, even if that goodness was a little. He would supplicate for them. When the time for the

Morning Prayer came, he offered the prayer with his companions. He then sat leaning while doing the *dhikr* of Allah and in his hand were his prayer beads (*subḥa*). He then died in this condition while sitting and did not fall. The prayer beads also did not fall from his hand. The news reached al-Amjad, the ruler of Baalbek. He came and saw him thus. He then said: "What if we were to build a structure around him and he was to be kept like this so people could see a sign." So it was said to him that this is not from the Sunnah. The shaykh was moved, washed, shrouded and prayed upon. He was buried beneath the almond tree under which he would sit offering the *dhikr* of Allah Most High—may Allah have mercy on him and may He fill his grave with light. He died on Saturday and he was over eighty years of age. May Allah Most High have mercy on him and make pleasant his resting place. Shaykh Muḥammad al-Faqīh al-Yūnīnī was from among his students and from among those who served him. He was the grandfather of all of those shaykhs in the town of Baalbek.

9. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr mentions in *Al-Bidāya w'al-Nihāya* (part 13, p. 137) regarding events that occurred in 630 AH.

[Among those who died this year was] Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī,[87] the author of *ʿAwārif al-Maʿārif*, ʿUmar ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdullah ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥamawayh. His name is ʿAbdullah al-Bakrī al-Baghdādī, Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ al-Suhrawardī, the shaykh of the Sufis in Baghdad. He was from among the major pious individuals and leaders

87—He is the one to whom returns all of the chains of the Suhrawardī *ṭarīqa*.

of the Muslims. He would leisurely come and go between the caliphs and kings, and he gathered great wealth which he distributed among the poor and needy. He once offered the Hajj and in his company was a group of ascetics the condition of whom only Allah Most High knew. In him were the qualities of generosity, aiding those who are in trouble, supporting the needy, and commanding good and forbidding vice. He would deliver lectures wearing threadbare clothes. He once recited this poem [a loose translation of which is as follows]:

There is not among the companions a man of divine ecstasy (wajd)
with whom we may speak, regarding the lofty way.
Nor is there a man afflicted with divine love with whom we may vie.

He began repeating this and went into ecstasy (*wajd*). From among those who were present was a youth who—dressed in a tunic and wearing a small turban—stood and said: "Oh shaykh, how many ecstatic statements will you utter (*shaṭaḥāt*) and reproach the people. I swear by Allah there is surely in them those who are not pleased to vie with you, nor will you understand that which they say. If only you recited [the following poem]:

There is none among the riders—and it is that their animals have
carried on—save lovers of him; and among them is the beloved,

It is as if Yūsuf is on each camel and there is Yaʿqūb in each
home within the neighbourhood.

The shaykh screamed and descended from the pulpit. He then headed towards the youth to apologize but could not find him. In his place he found a hole in which there was much

blood and which the youth had hollowed out with his feet while the shaykh recited the poem.

Ibn Khallikān has mentioned much of his poetry and greatly praised him. He died this year at the age of ninety-three, may Allah Most High have mercy on him.

10. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr mentions in *Al-Bidāya w'al-Nihāya* (part 13, p. 141) regarding events that occurred in 631 AH:

[Among those who died this year was] Shaykh ʿAbdullah al-Armanī. He was one of the worshippers and ascetics who would traverse lands. He would live in deserts, mountains and lowlands. He would gather with the *quṭub*, *abdāl*, *awtād*[88] and those of spiritual states (*ḥāl*), *kashf* and spiritual exercises, and travel in all regions and directions. He had studied the Qurʾān at the beginning [of his studies] and memorized [*Mukhtaṣar*] *al-Qudūrī* according to the *madhhab* of Abū Hanifah. He then preoccupied himself with rectifying conduct and spiritual exercises. He then took up residence in Damascus at the end of his life, where he died. He was buried at the foot of Mount Qasioun.

Many beautiful things have been narrated about him. Among them is that he said: "I once cut close to a town while travelling and my soul sought that I enter it. I promised myself I would not eat food therein. I entered it and passed by a laundry man who looked at me with aversion and so I became fearful of him and fled the town. This man caught up to me and with him was

88— These terms are explained in detail in section nine in the chapter regarding Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah. (IN)

some food. He then said: 'Eat, for you have exited the town.' So I said to him: 'You have such a [spiritual] station and you wash clothes in the markets?' He replied: 'Don't raise your head and don't look at any of your deeds. Remain a slave unto Allah. If he uses you in good, then be pleased with that.' He then said:

If it were said to me to die, then I would say hear and obey,
And I would say to the caller of death: welcome, welcome
(ahlan wa marhaba).

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr further narrates many other stories regarding this *shaykh*.

11. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr mentions in *Al-Bidāya w'al-Nihāya* (part 13, p. 227) regarding events that occurred in 658 AH:

[Among those who died this year there was] Shaykh Muḥammad al-Faqīh al-Yūnīnī al-Ḥanbalī al-Baʿlabakkī al-Ḥāfiẓ. He is Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdullah ibnʿĪsa ibn Abu'l-Rijāl Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Isḥāq ibn Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq.

Shaykh Quṭub al-Dīn al-Yūnīnī has narrated his lineage thus from the writing of his elder brother Abū al-Ḥusayn ʿAlī who informed him that his father told him: "We are from the progeny of Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq." He also said: "He only narrated

that to him at the time of death so that he abstains from accepting *ṣadaqa*.

Abū ʿAbdullah ibn Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Yūnīnī al-Ḥanbalī Taqī al-Dīn, the *faqīh*, the Ḥanbalī, the Ḥāfiẓ of hadith, he who benefitted others, the erudite, the worshipper and the ascetic. He was born in the year 572 AH. He heard [hadith] from al-Khashūʿī, Ḥanbal, al-Kindī and Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbdul Ghanī al-Maqdisī who would praise him. He learned *fiqh* from Shaykh al-Muwaffaq and remained in the company of Shaykh ʿAbdullah al-Yūnīnī and benefitted from him. Shaykh ʿAbdullah would praise him, give him preference and follow him in the *fatwas* of Sharīʿa.

He donned the mantle (*khirqa*) from Shaykh ʿAbdullah al-Baṭāʾihī and excelled in the knowledge of hadith. He memorised *Al-Jamʿ bayn al-Ṣaḥiḥayn* in its entirety and a good portion of *Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad*. He knew Arabic and learned it from al-Tāj al-Kindī. He would write beautifully. People would benefit from his expertise in many types of knowledge and would take from him good ways. He acquired great prestige among the rulers and others. He once performed the *wuḍūʿ* in the presence of Sulṭān al-Ashraf while he was by him at the castle listening to *al-Bukhārī* in the presence of [Shaykh] al-Zabīdī. When he had finished his *wuḍūʾ*, the sultan shook his towel and spread it on the ground for him to walk on. The sultan swore that it was clean and that he should step on it. The shaykh did so.

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Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr ﷺ then expands on his virtues and lofty status. He then writes:

All of the kings venerated him and exalted him. The children of al-ʿĀdil[89] and others would come to his town. This was also the case with the jurists (*fuqahā'*) like Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, Ibn ʿAbdus Salām, Ibn al-Ḥājib, al-Ḥuṣarī, Shams al-Dīn ibn Saniyy al-Dawla, Ibn al-Jawzī, and others who would venerate him and rely on his word on account of his knowledge, actions, honesty and trustworthiness.

Many spiritual states (*aḥwāl*), incidents of *kashf* and miracles have been narrated about him, may Allah have mercy on him. Some of them have said he was a *quṭb* for twelve years. Allah is most knowledgeable... His son, Quṭub al-Dīn mentioned that he died on 19th of Ramaḍān of this year at the age of eighty-eight years, may Allah Most High have mercy on him.

12. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr mentions in *Al-Bidāya wa al-Nihāya* (part 13, p. 342) regarding events that occurred in 694 AH:

[Among those who died this year there was] Al-Fārūqī, the shaykh, the Imām, the worshipper, the ascetic, the orator ʿIzz al-Dīn Abu'l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn Shaykh Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn ʿUmar ibn al-Faraj ibn Sābūr ibn ʿAlī ibn Ghunayma al-Fārūqī al-Wāsiṭī. He was born in the year 614 AH, heard hadith and travelled in search for them. He had an

89— Al-ʿĀdil (1145-1218) was an Ayyubid general and ruler. His full name was al-Malik al-ʿĀdil Sayf al-Dīn Abu-Bakr ibn Ayyūb. He was the son of Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb and a younger brother of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Ayyūbī. He provided crucial military and civilian support to his brother in their wars against the Crusaders. (IN)

excellent hand in this, and also in *Tafsīr*, *Fiqh*, delivering advice, and eloquence. He was religious, pious and ascetic. He came to Damascus during the rule of al-Ẓāhir[90] and was given the responsibility of teaching at the [Madrasa] al-Jārūḍiyya and leading prayers at the Ibn Hishām Masjid. For that, he was assigned a salary based on need, and this he would distribute to others. He was a man of pious conditions (*aḥwāl*) and many *kashf*...

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Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr ﷺ narrates many stories and makes mention of the lofty stations of this shaykh. He then continues:

The day of his death was a day to be seen in Wāsiṭ. His funeral prayer was also offered in Damascus and other places, may Allah Most High have mercy on him. He donned the mantle of Taṣawwuf according to the Suhrawardī way. He would recite the ten ways of reading the Qurʾān. He left behind two thousand two hundred books. He narrated a lot. Al-Birzālī heard many hadiths from him: *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī*, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, *Musnad al-Shāfiʿī*, *Musnad ʿAbd ibn Ḥumayd*, *Muʿjam al-Ṭabarānī al-Ṣaghīr*, *Musnad*

90— Al-Ẓāhir was the Mamluk Sultan Baibars whose complete name was *al-Malik al-Ẓāhir Rukn al-Dīn Bayḥaras al-Bunduqdārī* (1223–1277). He was one of the commanders of the forces which inflicted a devastating defeat on the Seventh Crusade of King Louis IX of France. (IN)

al-Dārimī, *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān* of Abū 'Ubayd, and another eighty other books apart from this.

13. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr mentions in *Al-Bidāya wa'l-Nihāya* (part 14, p. 227) regarding events that occurred in 749 AH:

On Saturday, 3rd of Rajab, the funeral prayer of Shaykh 'Alī al-Maghribī, one of the students of Shaykh Taqī al-Dīn ibn Taymiyyah, was offered at Jāmi' al-Aframī at the foot of Mount Qasioun where he was buried, may Allah have mercy on him. He was a person of worship, asceticism, and simplicity in dress and piety. He did not take up any post at all in this world. He also had no wealth. Rather, he would be given some spoils from war that he would spend little by little. He would be preoccupied with Taṣawwuf and left behind a wife and three children. May Allah have mercy on him.

IMĀM ḤĀFIẒ

ABŪ AL-FARAJ ʿABDUR RAḤMĀN IBN SHIHĀB IBN RAJAB AL-ḤANBALĪ

THE MAJORITY OF ḤĀFIẒ IBN RAJAB'S BOOKS ARE full of mention of the Sufi shaykhs, and their words and conditions. We shall suffice here with several quotations from his excellent book *Al-Dhayl ʿala Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila*.[91] All of those individuals whom he mentions and whom we shall mention are Ḥanbalī predecessors, or, from those to whom the shaykhs of the Salafi movement attribute themselves. By this, the purpose will be achieved in the best way, *inshā'* Allah, and it is He Most High upon Whom trust is placed.

91—To ensure an accurate translation, I have compared quotations from Shaykh 'Abdul Ḥafiẓ's book with two versions of Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab's *Al-Dhayl 'ala Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila*—one of which was published by Maktabah al-Obeikan in 1425 AH along with the footnotes (*taḥqīq*) of Shaykh 'Abdul Raḥmān ibn Sulaymān al-'Uthaymīn. Where texts vary, I have given preference to the al-'Uthaymīn version. (IN)

1. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab mentions in *Al-Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part 1, p. 211) in the biography of Imām Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdullah ibn ʿAlī al-Baghdādī:

Ḥāfiẓ al-Ḍiyā' al-Maqdisī said: Abū al-Faḍl ʿAbdul Wāḥid ibn Sulṭān informed us in Baghdad, that Muḥammad al-Muqri' informed us that he (Imām Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdullah ibn ʿAlī al-Baghdādī) gave them *ijāza* and recited the following poem to him:

The abandoning of affectation (takalluf)
in Taṣawwuf is necessary (wājib),

What is impossible for there to exist
is affectation among the fuqarā',[92]

They are a people, when darkness spreads you see them,
Prostrating in the way the reciters [of the Qur'ān] prostrate,

Their wajd—due to various causes—has a place,
But it is that fame can enter the limbs [on account of
the wajd thus leading to spiritual ruin],

They do not raise their voices loudly in respect to that (i.e. the wajd),
They remain aloof from places of desire,

They continuously fast uninterruptedly,
This is so in difficulty, if it comes, and at times of ease,

You see them among people when they come,
Like bright stars in the dark,

92— We often find the Sufis referring themselves in Arabic as *faqīr* (pl. *fuqarā'*), which literally means 'the poor', but in the context of Sufism means the Sufis (IN)

Their wishes prove to be true and their intentions are mighty,
Their stations are lofty, stationed on the star of Orion,

They have been faithful to the Lord in reality and in intention,
And they keep in mind the rights of Allah throughout [the day and night],

Dancing is a defect according to them in their covenant,
And so is also the qaḍīb[93] *without any obscuring [of the matter],*

These are the distinguishing features
of the pious and those who have passed,
From among the masters of asceticism and ʿulama,

So when you see someone contrary to their actions,
Then judge him to be in the thick of deviation.

2. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab mentions in *Al-Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part 1, p. 306):

ʿUthmān ibn Marzūq ibn Ḥumayd ibn Sallām al-Qurashī, the jurist and ascetic, Abū ʿAmr, the resident of the lands of Egypt. He remained in the company of Sharaf al-Islām ʿAbdul Wahhāb ibn al-Ḥanbalī in Damascus and mastered *Fiqh*. He made Egypt his home and remained there till he died. He issued *fatwas* there, taught, debated and spoke regarding the Knowing of Allah (*maʿrifa*) and spiritual realities (*ḥaqā'iq*). The spiritual training of the *murīds* in Egypt was his responsibility and a large number of pious individuals attribute themselves to

93— *Qaḍīb* (pl. *quḍbān*) is an old Arabian percussive instrument. It is a type of wand that musicians would beat on a sonorous substance and is mentioned in the *Arabian Nights*. (IN)

him. The shaykhs praised him and he gained complete acceptance from the elite and the lay masses. Many people benefitted from his company.

He would exalt Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir.[94] It is said that he joined him along with Abū Madyan in the plain of ʿArafāt and that Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir gave them both the mantle (*khirqa*), and that they heard from him a portion of his narrated hadiths.

He heard hadith and narrated them. Abu'l-Thanā' Maḥmūd ibn ʿAbdullah ibn Maṭrūḥ al-Miṣrī al-Ḥanbalī and Abu'l-Thanā' Ḥamd ibn Maysara ibn Aḥmad ibn Mūsā ibn Ghannām al-Ghudrānī al-Ḥanbalī al-Miṣrī al-Kāfiḥī—who were both pious individuals—heard hadith from him. The first was a reciter of the Qur'ān, he recited the Qur'ān beautifully. The second was a man who carried out a lot of *dhikr* and *tasbīḥ*; al-Mundhirī has narrated from him and he recited the Qur'ān from the first.

As to Shaykh Abū ʿAmr, he performed many miracles and was a man of many spiritual states (*aḥwāl*), lofty stations (*maqāmāt*) and excellent speech according to the way of the people of ṭarīqa. Among that is his saying: "The way to Knowing Him (*maʿrifa*) and His qualities (*ṣifāt*) lies in contemplation (*fikr*) and pondering over His commands and verses. There is no way for those of intellect to recognise his actual being. If godly wisdom was to reach its end within the limit of the intellect, and if it were that godly power was to be confined to [people's] understanding of knowledge, then this would be limiting [His] wisdom and a defect in [His] power. However, the secrets of

94—This is the Imām Rabbānī and eternal *quṭub* Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī al-Ḥanbalī, who is the source of all of the Qādri *silsilahs*.

the Eternal are veiled from minds in the way that the majesties of the All Mighty are veiled from eyes. Surely, the meaning of the attribute of Allah (*waṣf*) returns to the attribute, the intellect is blind from perceiving Him (*idrāk*) and the King's home is in the kingdom. The creation reaches His likeness and the quest becomes pressed for His figure: *'And the voices will turn low in awe for the Raḥmān. So, you will hear not but whispering.'* (20:108)..."

Among his speech there is that "the attributes of the knower of Allah (*ʿārif*) include fear (*khashya*) and awe (*hayba*). Be warned of imitating the people of *ḥāl* before perfecting the path and setting feet firm for it shall break you. The proof of your confusion is your remaining in the company of the confused and the proof of your being in a state of alienation from everything apart from Allah (*waḥsha*) is your being intimate with those who feel alienated..."

It has been narrated from Shaykh Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm ibn Muraysīl al-Ḍarīr, the *faqīh*, the Shāfiʿī, the ascetic, may Allah Most High have mercy on him, that he said: "Shaykh Abū ʿAmr ibn Marzūq was from among the *awtād* of Egypt. His mention was widespread and many miracles appeared from him. The Nile greatly increased in depth one year and it was likely that Egypt would be flooded; it had taken over land until it was close that the time to sow seeds would pass. People came to Shaykh Abū ʿAmr ibn Marzūq and made a hue because of this. He went to the bank of the Nile and performed *wuḍū'* in it. At that moment it decreased by two cubits (*dhirāʿ*) and came off the land until it became clear and the people were able to sow the next day."

He said: "Some years, the Nile did not rise at all and a major portion of time to till the land had passed; prices increased and destruction was feared. The people came to Shaykh Abū 'Amr ibn Marzūq and made a hue, so he went to the bank of the Nile, performed *wuḍū'* in it using a jug that was with his attendant. The Nile rose that very day. Its increase continued until it reached its limit. Allah sent with it many benefits and He placed blessings (*baraka*) in the people's harvests that year."

I read the writings of Shaykh Nāṣiḥ al-Dīn 'Abdur Raḥmān ibn Najm ibn al-Ḥanbalī, who said: "I visited Shaykh 'Uthmān ibn Marzūq in Egypt, who said that Asad al-Dīn Shīrkūh[95] will come to these lands and go back, he shall not gain anything. He shall then return and go back and shall not take this country. Then he shall return and—I don't know if it was the third or the fourth—take control of Egypt. It happened as he mentioned. I asked him: 'My master, where did you get this from?' He said: 'I swear by Allah oh my son, I don't know the unseen. I have a habit of seeing the Prophet of Allah ﷺ. I see him in some gatherings and he tells me.' I said: It is possible he means in a dream..."

Shaykh Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Taymiyyah, ﷺ, said: "And over there are groups which attribute themselves to Shaykh Abū

95— Asad al-Dīn Shīrkūh ibn Shādhī (d. 1169 CE) was an important Kurdish military commander and uncle of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Ayyūbī. Shīrkūh served under Nūr al-Dīn al-Zengī who sent him to Egypt in 1163 CE to settle a dispute between between a Fatimid vizier, Shawar, and his lieutenant. This vizier had a habit of switching alliances between Nūr al-Dīn al-Zengī and the Crusader states. It is said that Shīrkūh entered Egypt three times to deal with Shawar. He died in January 1169 CE and was succeeded by his nephew Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn who had accompanied him in his campaigns in Egypt. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn also succeeded Nūr al-Dīn al-Zengī, uniting Egypt and Syria, a development that enabled him to drive out the crusaders from Jerusalem. (IN)

ʿAmr ibn Marzūq and they say such things that are contrary to that on which Shaykh Abū ʿAmr is on. This shaykh would attribute himself to the *madhhab* of Imām Aḥmad and was from the companions of Shaykh ʿAbdul Wahhāb ibn Shaykh Abū al-Faraj, whereas these groups attribute themselves to the *madhhab* of al-Shāfiʿī and speak such words that are contrary to the *madhhab* of al-Shāfiʿī and Aḥmad, rather contrary to all of the Imāms of the Muslims and their shaykh Shaykh Abū ʿAmr. As to this Shaykh Abū ʿAmr, he is a shaykh from the shaykhs of the people of knowledge and religion; his example is like theirs..."

3. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab mentions in *Al-Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part 1, p. 290):

ʿAbdul Qādir ibn Abū Ṣāliḥ ibn ʿAbdullah ibn Jankī Dost ibn Abū ʿAbdullah ibn ʿAbdullah al-Jīlī, the ascetic, the shaykh of the era, the exemplar of the knowers (*ʿārifs*) of Allah, the *sultan* of the shaykhs, the master of the people of ṭarīqa in his age, the reviver of the faith, Abū Muḥammad, the man of many spiritual stations (*maqāmāt*), miracles, sciences, inner knowledge and famous spiritual conditions (*aḥwāl*).

Some people mention his lineage reaches ʿAlī ibn Abū Tālib ... he was born in the year 470 AH or 471 AH in Kīlān and came to Baghdad in his youth. He heard hadiths there from Abū Ghālib ibn al-Bāqillānī, Jaʿfar al-Sarrāj, Abū Bakr ibn Sūsin, Ibn Bayān, Abū Ṭālib ibn Yūsuf, Ibn Khushaysh and Ubayy al-Zaynī. He gained proficiency in *Fiqh* from Qāḍī Abū Saʿd al-Makhrāmī and Abu'l-Khaṭṭāb al-Kalūdhānī. It is said that he also studied under ʿAla ibn ʿAqīl and Qāḍī Abū

al-Ḥusayn, and gained expertise in the *madhhab*, the differences within it, and its principles, etc. He studied literature under Abū Zakariyyā al-Tabrīzī. He remained in the company of Shaykh Ḥammād al-Dabbās the ascetic and lectured at the *madrasa* of his Shaykh al-Makharrimī. He remained there till he died and was buried there.

Ibn al-Jawzī said: "This *madrasa* was very quaint and was handed over to ʿAbdul Qādir who would lecture people. He became well known for his asceticism. He had a good manner of behavior and would remain silent. The *madrasa* became small on account of the great number of people. He used to sit close to the city wall, leaning on the *ribāṭ*[96] and many people would visit him at his gathering. The *madrasa* was improved and expanded, and the general masses rallied together in building it. He remained at his *madrasa*, teaching and preaching until he died."

Ibn al-Samʿānī mentioned him: "He was the Imām of the Ḥanbalīs and their shaykh during his age; he was a jurist, pious, devout, one who would give much in charity, a person of widespread mention, a person who was constantly in thought and someone who would weep very quickly. I wrote [knowledge] from him. He used to live close to the Bāb al-Azajj in the *madrasa* that they built for him..."

I say: Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir appeared to the people and sat to lecture after 520 AH. He received widespread acceptance from people. They firmly believed in his religiosity and piety, and benefited from him, his words and advice. The Ahl al-Sunna

96— A *ribāṭ*, in this context, is a building designed specifically for Sufi gatherings. It is a place for spiritual retreat and character reformation. It is synonymous with the words *zāwiya* and *khānqāh*. (IN)

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triumphed with his appearance. His life, sayings, miracles and *kashf* became famous. Kings would be in awe of him; what then must have been the state of their subjects?

Shaykh Muwaffaq al-Dīn, the author of *Al-Mughnī*, said: "I have never heard so many miracles being narrated about anyone more than what has been narrated regarding Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir. I have seen none being exalted on account of the religion more than him."

Shaykh ʿIzz al-Dīn ibn ʿAbdus Salām, the shaykh of the *Shafiʿiyya*, said: "The miracles of none of the shaykhs have been narrated with such widespread agreement (*tawātur*) save those of Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir, for indeed his miracles have been narrated with *tawātur*."

... and I have also read the writings of Ibn al-Ḥanbalī that his maternal uncle Abu'l-Ḥasan ibn Najā, the orator (*wāʿiẓ*), met Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir. He narrated from him that he said: "On the day of Eid I went to the *Mūsālla* early and went to the place where Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir used to offer his prayer." He said: "Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir came and with him was a large group of people. People were kissing his hand and he performed two units of prayer before the Eid prayer. So I said to myself, what is this prayer? It is from the Sunnah that no supererogatory prayers are offered before it. When he had made the *salām* [at the end of his prayer], he turned to me and said: 'There is a reason for it.'"

...Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir, may Allah Most High have mercy on him, has excellent words in regards to Tawḥīd, the attributes of Allah (*ṣifāt*), destiny (*qadr*) and in relation to the sciences of *maʿrifa* which is in agreement with the Sunnah. He

authored *Al-Ghunya li Ṭālibī Ṭarīq al-Ḥaqq*, which is famous, and *Futūḥ al-Ghayb*. His students gathered much of his advices which were delivered in his gatherings. He adhered firmly to the Sunnah in the issue of the attributes of Allah and destiny, etc., and was profound in refuting those who opposed it...

I have also narrated from the writings of Sayf ibn al-Majd al-Ḥāfiẓ: "I heard the shaykh, the ascetic, ʿAlī ibn Salmān al-Baghdādī, who is popularly known as *al-Khabbāz* (the Bread Maker), at his *ribāṭ* in the western part of Baghdad, narrate from Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir al-Jīlī—how remarkable was he, he was a man of such *kashf* and miracles that have not been narrated from anyone of his time—that he said: 'There will not be a *walī* of Allah Most High, save that his beliefs will be that of Aḥmad, may Allah be pleased with him...'"

Ibn al-Najjār said: "I heard Abū Muḥammad al-Akhfash say, 'I used to enter on Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir in the middle of winter when it was severely cold. He would be dressed in a single tunic and on his head would be a cap. Sweat would come out of his body and around him would be someone who would fan him as if it was in the height of heat."

... Ibn al-Jawzī said: "Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir died on a Saturday night, 8th of Rabīʿ al-Akhir, some said it was the 9th, 561 AH After the Maghrib prayer. He was buried immediately at the *madrasa* and was ninety years old."

I heard that he would say at the time of his death: "With ease, with ease." He would then say: "Peace be upon you also, peace be upon you also (*wa ʿalaykum al-salām*). I am coming to you, I am coming to you."

4. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab mentions in *Al-Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part 1, p. 384):

Saʿd ibn ʿUthmān ibn Marzūq ibn Ḥumayd ibn Salama al-Qurashi, al-Miṣrī by birth and al-Baghdadī in terms of residence, the jurist, the ascetic, Abū al-Khayr, the son of Shaykh Abū ʿAmr who was mentioned before... He learned *Fiqh* in the *madhhab* in Baghdad under Abu'l-Fatḥ ibn al-Mannī and would fervently attend his lectures. He heard [hadith] from Abū Muḥammad ibn al-Khashshāb and others. He gained widespread acceptance from the elite and general public. He was God-fearing, an ascetic, and one who worshipped a lot.

I have read the writings of Nāsiḥ al-Dīn ibn al-Ḥanbalī regarding him: "He was preoccupied in memorizing the book *Al-Wajhayn wa al-Riwāyatayn*, which was authored by Qāḍī Abū Yaʿlā. He was in relation to asceticism, piety, cleanliness and abstinence in food at a level that would render incapable many of those who strove hard in worship. He would walk with his head lowered gathering paper that had been written on until he had gathered much. Using a helper he would take it to the riverbank and take responsibility in washing them and then letting them flow in the water. If he asked anyone for a need, he would give them some due even if it was lighting a lamp for him... A person in Baghdad saw the Prophet ﷺ in a dream, and he was saying: 'If it wasn't for Shaykh Saʿd, then punishment would befall you.' Shaykh Saʿd then came for Friday prayers and he had no knowledge of this dream. The people busied themselves with him, taking blessings from him. They crowded round him and pushed him several times. It was as if a caller was calling out in the hearts of people and

the shaykh was, meanwhile, saying: 'I seek Allah's refuge from tribulation. What's happened to me and what's happened to the people?' This continued until the people left him and he was able to save himself from them."

Al-Qādisī said: "He was one of the ascetics, the *abdāl* and *awtād*.[97] A person to whom people would travel—and whoever is devoted to Allah people turn to them. He would fast during the day and stand [in prayer] during the night. He came to Baghdad and stayed at Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir's *ribāṭ*. He would never accept anything from anyone. He would never call at the door of any of the kings. Every year, he would be given something from his property in Egypt that would suffice him the entire year. My father told me: 'I used to often visit him and so I came to him one day when it occurred to me that I have been visiting him for some time and that he has never taken an oath to me and never presented me with anything. I had hardly finished thinking this when he said to me: "Oh Aḥmad, I swear by Allah that I am not happy for you to eat my food, for it is the food of the wretched." I was then overcome with immense ecstasy (*wajd*). He then went inside to bring me something from his provisions. So I thought to myself: "If he brings me left over bread then people will disapprove." He then quickly said from inside: "Oh Shaykh Aḥmad, but two pieces of bread." My astonishment and awe increased. Shaykh Saʿd was someone who would cry a lot and someone who was of immense humility.'"

Ibn al-Najjār said: "He was a pious slave, and famous for worship, striving hard (*mujāhada*), piety, austerity, sufficing with

97— The explanation of these two terms, and other similar nomenclature, will appear in the section regarding Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah. (IN)

little and being chaste. He would live very roughly, dress coarsely and would often stay aloof from people. He was extremely cautious in cleanliness..."

It was said that when his shaykh, Ibn al-Mannī was about to pass away he willed that Shaykh Saʿd prays over him. It has already been mentioned that he prayed over him that day and that the people crowded round him to gain *baraka* from him until it was close that he might die.

Al-Mundhirī said: "He died on 6 Rabiʿ al-Akhir, 592 AH, in prostration during prayer. He was buried the next day..." Ibn al-Najjār said that he recited the following verse in the prayer in which he died: *"So, in case he (the dying person) is from among those blessed with nearness, then (for him) there is comfort and fragrance and garden of bliss."* (56:88-89)

5. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab mentions in *Al-Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part 2, p. 36) in the biography of Shaykh Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdullah ibn Abū al-Faraj al-Jubbāʾī al-Ṭarābulūsī al-Shāmī:

Abu'l-Faraj ibn al-Ḥanbalī — and I quote from his writings — said: "Shaykh ʿAbdullah al-Jubbāʾī was greatly honored in Baghdad. When I entered Isfahan in the year 580 AH I found him there and he was a man who was greatly revered. He would come every day to visit me. It was through him that I heard in the presence of Ḥāfiẓ Abū Mūsā a portion of *Al-Subāʿiyyāt*, for he was ill and the people had been curtained away from him. They were, however, unable to keep Shaykh ʿAbdullah away and so we entered with him. He took permission from Ḥāfiẓ Abū Mūsā on my behalf to recite hadith in his presence.

When he would walk in the bazar, people would stand up for him. Shaykh Ṭalḥa—in other words al-ʿUlthī—narrated to me that Shaykh ʿAbdullah—in other words al-Jubbā'ī—undertook many spiritual exercises (*riyāḍāt*) and sacrifices (*mujāhadāt*), the mention of which would become prolonged...

Shaykh Abū Muḥammad heard hadith in Baghdad from Ibn Nāṣir al-Ḥāfiẓ, al-Urmawī, Ibn al-Ṭallāya, Saʿīd ibn al-Banna, Daʿwān ibn ʿAlī al-Jubbī Abū ʿAlī Ḥamd ibn Shātīl al-Qāḍī and Abu'l-Muʿammar al-Anṣārī, et al. He heard hadith in Isfahan from Abu'l-Khayr al-Bāghbānī, Masʿūd al-Thaqafī, et al. He gained expertise in *Fiqh* in Baghdad under Abū Ḥakīm al-Ṅahrawānī. He also took from him that portion of *Sharḥ al-Hidāya* that he wrote. He also remained in the company of Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir al-Jīlī for a period of time; this is where he inclined to asceticism, piety, goodness and solitude, and benefited from him. He used to narrate much regarding his spiritual states (*awḥāl*) and miracles.

Ibn al-Najjār said: "ʿAbdullah ibn Abu'l-Ḥasan al-Jubbā'ī wrote to me and I narrate from his writings: 'I used to listen to the book *Ḥilya al-Awliyā'* under our Shaykh Abu'l-Faḍl ibn Nāṣir and my heart softened and so I said to myself: I want to go into isolation from people and preoccupy myself in worship. I carried on like this and offered *salah* behind Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir. After he finished, we sat in front of him and he looked at me and said: "When you want to go into isolation, then do not do so until you have learned *Fiqh* well, sat in the company of the shaykhs and learned manners from them; only then will isolation (*inqiṭāʿ*) be apt. Otherwise, you shall continue and go into isolation before you have gained expertise in *Fiqh* and you

will be like a young bird that has not grown feathers. When something from your religion puts you in a difficulty then you would come out of your *zāwiya* and ask people about the issue. It is appropriate for he who associates with a *zāwiya* to be like a candle from which light is gained."'"

He also said: "The shaykh was one day talking about sincerity (*ikhlāṣ*), ostentation (*riyā'*) and vanity (*ʿujub*), and I was present in that gathering. I then thought to myself: How can one be saved from vanity? The shaykh turned to me and said: 'When you see something that it is from Allah, He gives you the *tawfīq* to do a good deed and you take yourself out from disgrace, then you are saved from vanity.'"

6. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab mentions in *Al-Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part 2, p. 269):

Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdullah ibn ʿĪsa ibn Abu'l-Rijāl Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Yūnīnī al- Baʿlabakkī, the shaykh, the *faqīh*, the hadith scholar, the ḥāfiẓ, the ascetic, the knower of Allah (*ʿārif*), the man of Allah (*rabbānī*), Taqī al-Dīn, Abū ʿAbdullah ibn Abu'l-Ḥusayn. He was one of the notable individuals and shaykhs of Islam.

He was born on the 6th of Rajab in the year 572 AH in Younine, one of the villages of Baalbek. He grew up as an orphan in Damascus and his mother sat him down to make arrows. He then memorized the Qur'ān and heard hadith from Abū Ṭāhir al-Khashūʿī, Abū 'l-Tamām al-Qalānisī, Ḥanbal al-Mukabbir, Abu'l-Yamān al-Kindī, Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbd al-Ghanī and others. He learned *Fiqh* very well from Shaykh Muwaffaq

al-Dīn. He took hadith from Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbdul Ghanī, Arabic from Abu'l-Yumn al-Kindī and excelled in the *khaṭṭ al-mansūb* style of calligraphy. He donned the mantle (*khirqa*) of Taṣawwuf from Shaykh ʿAbdullah al-Baṭā'iḥī, the companion of Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir. He remained in the company of Shaykh ʿAbdullah al-Yūnīnī the ascetic—a man of many spiritual states (*aḥwāl*) and miracles who used to be known as the Lion of the Levant—and benefitted from him. Shaykh ʿAbdullah would praise the shaykh, the *faqīh*, give him preference and follow him in *fatwas*. His shaykh Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbdul Ghanī would also likewise praise him. He excelled in hadith and in that regard memorized major books such as al-Ḥumaydi's *Al-Jamʿ bayn al-Ṣaḥiḥayn* and *Ṣaḥiḥ Muslim* very well...

ʿUmar ibn al-Ḥājib al-Ḥāfiẓ has mentioned him, he went to great lengths in describing him and said: "He remained preoccupied with *Fiqh* and hadith until he became an Imām and a *ḥāfiẓ*..."He also said: "His like in perfection, proficiency and gathering the two sciences of Sharīʿa and Ḥaqīqa was unseen in his age..."

Ḥāfiẓ ʿIzz al-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī said: "He is one of the famous shaykhs, who combined between knowledge and *dīn*. He used to memorize many Prophetic hadiths and was famous for that." He was very eager to listen and read hadith in spite of his advanced age and lofty standing. The people of Baalbek would listen to him reciting upon those shaykhs who would visit them such as al-Qazwīnī, al-Bahā' al-Maqdisī and Ibn Rawāḥa al-Ḥamawī, et al. He was a man of spiritual states, miracles, *wird* and worship which he would not leave

nor delay from the [appointed] time due to anyone visiting him, even if they were kings. He did not agree with showing miracles and would say: "In the same way Allah has made it necessary on the prophets to show their miracles (*muʿjizāt*), He has made it necessary on the *awliyā'* to keep their miracles (*karamāt*) discreet."

It has been narrated from Shaykh ʿUthmān, the shaykh of Dīr Nāʿish,[98] who was from the people of spiritual states: "The shaykh, the *faqīh*, gathered knowledge for eighteen years. He, may Allah have mercy on him, had a lofty standing among the kings who would revere him a lot—so much that once he was at the citadel in Damascus listening to [*Ṣaḥiḥ*] *al-Bukhārī* with Malik al-Ashraf.[99] The shaykh, the *faqīh* once stood up to perform *wuḍūʿ*. The sultan stood up, shook his towel when the shaykh had finished his *wuḍūʿ* and presented it to him so he could dry himself with it or step on it with his foot; he also swore it was pure and that it was necessary that he did so."

Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī said: "Our Shaykh Abu'l-Ḥusayn ibn al-Yūnīnī, or the son of the shaykh, the *faqīh*, has narrated this to us—I am doubtful who." He added: "Malik al-Ashraf once came to Baalbek and before anything else he came to the house of the shaykh, the *faqīh*. He alighted [from his mount] and knocked on the door. Someone asked: 'Who is it?' He replied: 'Mūsā ..."

98— Dir Nāʿish, according to Yāqūt in his book *Al-Khazal wa al-Dalāl*, is a village close to Baalbek. (IN)

99— Al-Ashraf Mūsā Abu'l-Fatḥ al-Muẓaffar al-Dīn (d. 1237 ce) was a ruler of the Ayyūbid dynasty. (IN)

All of the royals venerated him and exalted him. This included the children of al-ʿĀdil[100] and others, and likewise the shaykhs and *faqīhs* such as Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām, Ibn al-Ḥājib and al-Ḥuṣarī, judges such as Ibn Sanā' al-Dawla, Ibn al-Jawzī and others. People would benefit from his knowledge and expertise and would take from his pious ways. He was greatly awe-inspiring, glowingly white-haired, handsome, well built, of good character and dignified. He used to wear a cap, the wool of which would be on the exterior like that of his shaykh, Shaykh ʿAbdullah. He was greatly followed and obeyed.

It was once narrated that he intended to travel to Ḥarrān.[101] He said: "News had reached that there was a man there who knew the knowledge of inheritance very well. Shaykh ʿAbdullah al-Yūnīnī's letter reached me the night before the morning that I wished to travel. He emphasised that I travel to Al-Quds al-Sharīf (Jerusalem), something that I didn't want to do. So I opened a copy of the Qur'ān and this verse of the Most High appeared: '*Follow those who do not claim any reward from you and who are on the right path.*' (36:21) I went

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100— Al-ʿĀdil (1145-1218 ce) was an Ayyūbid general and ruler. His full name was al-Malik al-ʿĀdil Sayf al-Dīn Abu-Bakr ibn Ayyūb. He was the son of Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb and a younger brother of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Ayyūbī. He provided crucial military and civilian support to his brother in their wars against the Crusaders. (IN)

101— Ḥarrān was a major ancient city in Upper Mesopotamia, the site of which is close to the modern village of Altinbasak in Turkey. In the beginning of the Islamic period it was located in the lands belonging to the Muḍar tribe and during the Umayyad reign became the seat of an Islamic empire that stretched from Spain to Central Asia. During the late 8th and 9th centuries Ḥarrān was a center for translating works of astronomy, philosophy, natural sciences, and medicine from Greek to Arabic. It later became a popular residence for Ayyūbid princes but was then completely destroyed and abandoned during the Mongol invasions of the Levant in the 13th century. Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah was born in Ḥarrān and moved to Damascus with his family during the Mongol invasions. (IN)

out to Al-Quds and found that al-Ḥarrānī there. I learned the knowledge of inheritance from him until I felt that I had become more proficient than he in it."

... He died on the 19th of Ramaḍān in the year 658 AH in Baalbek. He was buried close to his shaykh ʿAbdullah al-Yūnīnī, may Allah have mercy on them both.

7. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab mentions in *Al-Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part 2, p. 358):

Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAbdur Raḥmān ibn Masʿūd ibn ʿUmar al-Wāsiṭī al-Ḥizāmī, the ascetic, the exemplar (*qudwa*), the knower of Allah (*ʿārif*), ʿImād al-Dīn, Abu'l-ʿAbbās, the son of the shaykh of the Ḥizāmīyyīn.[102] He was born on the 11th or 12th Dhu'l-Hijjah, 657 AH in the eastern portion of Wāsiṭ. His father was the shaykh of the Aḥmadiyyah group.[103] Shaykh Taqī al-Dīn ibn Taymiyyah would exalt and honor him and would say regarding him: "He is the Junayd of his time." He also wrote him a letter from Egypt and wrote at the beginning: "To our shaykh, the Imām, the knower of Allah (*ʿārif*), the exemplar, the *sālik* (he who traverses the Path)."

Al-Birzālī said regarding him in his index: "He is a pious man, a knower of Allah, a man of devotion, worship, seclusion and aversion from the world. He has solid words regarding correct Taṣawwuf. He was a caller to the path of Allah Most High. His pen was vaster than his spoken word. He abridged *Al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, and he would make a living through calligraphy

102— Ḥizām, according to the *Muʿjam al-Buldān*, is one of the districts in the city of Wāsiṭ, which is located in eastern Iraq on the west bank of the Tigris river. (IN)

103— This is perhaps a reference to the Aḥmadiyya or Badawīyya Sufi order that was founded by Sīdī Aḥmad al-Badawī (596-675 AH). (IN)

(*naskh*). He would only write an amount through which his necessities might be met. He loved the people of hadith and would extol them. He would firmly manage his time."

Al-Dhahabī said: "He was a man of standing (*sayyid*), a knower of Allah, of lofty rank and someone who had withdrawn himself to Allah Most High. He would write calligraphy for a stipend and would sustain himself through this. It was very rare that he would accept anything from anyone. He wrote numerous books regarding Sulūk and travelling to Allah Most High, and in refutation of the Ittiḥādiyya[104] and innovators. He was a caller to the Sunnah. His *madhhab* in regards to the attributes of Allah was that of the pious predecessors; he would pass by them as they came. A group who remained in his company benefitted from him. I do not know whether he left in Damascus anyone who is according to his way."

I say: Among his books there is *Sharḥ Manāzil al-Sā'irīn*, which he did not complete. He also has a beautiful poem in regards to Sulūk. Al-Dhahabī and al-Birzālī have written regarding him and a large group of our shaykhs and others heard hadith from him. He had excellent familiarity with the sciences, was of beautiful strong words and excellent understanding, and possessed extremely beautiful writing. He would fill his time with litanies (*awrād*), acts of worship, writing, studying, *dhikr* and contemplation; he would devote his self to meditating, loving and being fond of Allah, and remaining with Him; he was someone who was greatly dedicated to tasting

104— Ittiḥādiyya, also known as the Ahl al-Ittiḥād (or People of Union), was a group of heretical Sufis who believed in the doctrine of *ittiḥād* or union with Allah. They have nothing to do with Sufism and have been refuted by authentic Sufis. (IN)

spiritual bliss (*dhawq*), and experiencing spiritual lights (*tajallī*) and the light of the heart. He would seclude himself away from people. He would only meet with those who loved him and the meeting of whom would provide a religious benefit.

8. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab mentions in *Al-Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part 2, p. 361):

Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Abū Naṣr ibn al-Dubāhī al-Baghdādī, the ascetic, *shams al-dīn*, Abū ʿAbdullah ibn Abu'l-ʿAbbās. He was born 636 AH, or 637 AH, in Baghdad. He remained in the company of Yaḥyā al-Ṣarṣarī who was his maternal uncle and also Shaykh ʿAbdullah Kutayla for some time. He also travelled with him. Al-Tustarī from Mardin[105] gave him *ijāza*. He resided in Makkah for ten years and entered Asia Minor (al-Rūm), Mesopotamia (al-Jazīra), Egypt and the Levant. He then made home in Damascus and died there.

Shaykh Kamāl al-Dīn ibn al-Zamlakānī said regarding him: "He was a shaykh, pious, a knower of Allah (*ʿārif*), an ascetic, and one who greatly yearned for knowledge and its people, and one who was eager to do good, strive in worship and withdraw from the world. He left it and firmly indulged in worship, perpetual [good] actions and remaining serious. He immersed his time in good. He was erudite, had an excellent share in the sciences and a beautiful way of presenting that which he wrote. He sought religious benefits, was austere in his life, abstinent, firm in the faith, and one who would keep away from those

105— Mardin is a city situated in what today is southeastern Turkey. It is known for its strategic location on a rocky mountain overlooking the plains of northern Syria. (IN)

whose *dīn* he feared. He loved the pious and the people of good. He would remain separate from people and was awe-inspiring. He would spend the night awake and fasted a lot. He would lengthen the prayer with humility (*khushūʿ*), coyness and in an absorbed fashion. He would recite the Qur'ān and would not be seen distant from any good deed and pious action. He would give alms (*ṣadaqa*) secretly. He would advise the brothers and would strive hard in their affairs. He would support his family well and would diligently attend congregational prayers at the *jāmiʿ* mosque. He would not call upon sultans, governors or the people of the world (*ahl al-dunyā*) save when there was a religious necessity. He used to be coarse in his food and attire, and loved the way of the pious predecessors. When a man was to see him, he would see seriousness in his face. He would stand for that which appeared to him to be the truth. He would command good in those matters which he could and forbid that evil which he could. He remained like this until he died."

Al-Birzālī said: "He was one of those shaykhs who were the knowers of Allah (*ʿārif*) and pious. He uttered excellent and concise words and wrote books. He was of excellent words, devoid of affectatious behaviour (*takalluf*), full of sincerity, a follower of the Sunnah, excellent in knowledge and one of the masters."

Al-Dhahabī said: "He was an Imām, a *faqīh al-nafs*[106] and a knower of the dealings of hearts. He remained in the company of a great number of shaykhs, and took from them the manners

106— Mufti Taqi Usmani writes in *Mere Walid Mere Shaykh*: "*Faqih al-nafs* is among the terminology used by the *fuqahā'*. It refers to that person who after long engagement with the science of *fiqh* is granted by Allah Most High a natural disposition with which one is able to come to correct conclusions [in matters of *fiqh*] without referring to books." (IN)

of the Community (*al-qawm*) and their way (*ṭarīq*). He was of excellent gatherings, a follower of the Sunnah, one who would warn of *bidʿa* and yearned much. He left his father and his comforts and separated himself from people. He entered Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, the Levant, Egypt and the Hijaz, and remained in the company of the remaining Sufis. He would tread in their steps and memorized much from them and the shaykhs of the path. He spent a lot of the wealth from his inheritance on the poor and studied *Fiqh* according to the *madhhab* of [Imām] Aḥmad in his youth. He remained in the cities of the Two Holy Sanctuaries for under ten years. He married and had children. When the radiance of our shaykh—in other words Ibn Taymiyyah—shone, he was successful in all that he sought, travelled to Damascus with his family and took up home there. I have quoted some things from him and heard a profoundly eloquent speech (*khuṭba*) from his book. I remained in his company less than ten years and heard a portion [of hadith] from him according to his *ijāza* from al-Nashtabarī."

I say: al-Birzālī and al-Dhahabī heard [hadith] from him and both have mentioned him in their indexes.

9. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab mentions in *Al-Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part 2, p. 133):

ʿAbdullah ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Qudāma ibn Miqdām ibn Naṣr ibn ʿAbdullah al-Maqdisī, then al-Dimashqī, al-Ṣāliḥī, the *faqīh*, the ascetic, the Imām, the *shaykh al-Islām*, one of the noteworthy individuals, Muwaffaq al-Dīn, Abū Muḥammad, the brother of Shaykh Abū ʿUmar who was mentioned earlier.

whose *dīn* he feared. He loved the pious and the people of good. He would remain separate from people and was awe-inspiring. He would spend the night awake and fasted a lot. He would lengthen the prayer with humility (*khushūʿ*), coyness and in an absorbed fashion. He would recite the Qurʾān and would not be seen distant from any good deed and pious action. He would give alms (*ṣadaqa*) secretly. He would advise the brothers and would strive hard in their affairs. He would support his family well and would diligently attend congregational prayers at the *jāmiʿ* mosque. He would not call upon sultans, governors or the people of the world (*ahl al-dunyā*) save when there was a religious necessity. He used to be coarse in his food and attire, and loved the way of the pious predecessors. When a man was to see him, he would see seriousness in his face. He would stand for that which appeared to him to be the truth. He would command good in those matters which he could and forbid that evil which he could. He remained like this until he died."

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He was born in Shaʿbān 541 AH in Jammāʿīl[107]... he travelled to Baghdad along with his maternal aunt's son, Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbdul Ghanī in 561 AH. They heard much from Hibatullah al-Daqqāq, Ibn al-Baṭī, Saʿd-Allah al-Dajājī, Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir, Ibn Tāj al-Farrā'... He remained with Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir[108] at his *madrasa* for a short time and he recited to him [*Mukhtasar*] *Al-Khiraqī*.[109] The shaykh then passed away and so he remained firm in the company of Abu'l-Fatḥ ibn al-Mannī and studied the *madhhab*, differences [in *fiqh*] and the principles of *Fiqh* under him until he became erudite...

Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī[110] said: "He was an Imām in the sciences. In his era, there was none after his brother Abū ʿUmar and al-ʿImād more ascetic and God-fearing than he. He was very bashful, someone who had relinquished the world and its people, simple and pleasant, humble, a lover of the poor, of

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107— Jammāʿīl is a Palestinian town in the northern part of the West Bank close to Nablus. It is presently known as Jammain. The village was home to the Banu Qudāma tribe who moved to Damascus during Crusader rule in Palestine in the middle of the 12th century. Ibn Qudāma's father, Shaykh Aḥmad ibn Qudāma left Jammāʿīl fearing persecution by King Baldwin for preaching against the Crusaders. The Banu Qudāma then settled in an uninhabited area outside Damaşcus, which then became known as the town of Al-Ṣāliḥiyya. As the city expanded it gradually became a Damascene quarter. Located at the foot of Mount Qasioun, Al-Ṣāliḥiyya was noted for its inhabitants' piety, *masjids*, *madrasas* and *zāwiyas*. (IN)

108— This is the Imām Rabbānī and *quṭub* Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī to whom all of the Qadri *silsilas* return to.

109— *Mukhtasar al-Khiraqī* is one of the primer texts in Ḥanbalī *Fiqh* compiled by the scholars of this *madhhab*. The author, Abu'l-Qāsim ʿUmar ibn ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn al-Khiraqī was from Baghdad. He was a contemporary of Imām Aḥmad's two sons, ʿAbdullah and Ṣāliḥ. Al-Khiraqī's father was also a companion of the students of Imām Aḥmad. One of its more famous commentaries is *Al-Mughnī* by Ibn Qudāma which is considered one of the greatest. (IN)

110— Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī was Abū Muẓaffar Yūsuf ibn ʿAbdullah (d. 654 AH). He was the grandson of Ibn al-Jawzī from his daughter. (IN)

good manners, benign and philanthropic. Whoever saw him, it was as if he had seen some of the Companions and it was as if light was emanating from his face. He would worship a lot and would read a seventh of the Qurʾān each day and night. He would in the most only offer the two *rakaʿa* of Sunnah at his home in following the Sunnah. He would always attend my gathering at the *jāmiʿ* [*masjid*] of Damascus and Qasioun."

He also said: "I saw in Shaykh Abū ʿUmar, his brother al-Muwaffaq and his brother in law al-ʿImād that which we narrate regarding the Companions and the unique *awliyāʾ*. Their condition made me forget my family and homeland. I then returned to them with the intention of staying [with them]. It is hoped that I remain with them in the abode of eternal dwelling."

Ibn al-Najjār said: "Shaykh Muwaffaq al-Dīn was the Imām of the Ḥanābila the *jāmiʿ* [*masjid*]. He was reliable, a proof (*hujja*), noble, of excellent traits, perfect intellect, meticulous in verifying, someone who would always remain silent, upright, free from blame, devout and a worshipper according to the rules of the predecessors. There was light and calmness and awe in his face. A man would benefit from seeing him before even listening to his words. He compiled many excellent books regarding the *madhhab* and differences [of *Fiqh*]. Students and companions would head towards him. His name became widespread and his mention became famous. He knew hadith well and he was accomplished in Arabic."

ʿUmar ibn al-Ḥājib, the *ḥāfiẓ*, said in his index: "He is the Imām of the aʾimma, the *mufti* of the Ummah. Allah selected him with great learning, brilliant intelligence and perfect

knowledge. Countries buzzed with his mention and the times have been reluctant in producing his like. He took to gathering the transmitted and rational realities. As to hadith, he was a horse rider outstripping the rest; and as to *Fiqh*, he was competent in that field and the most knowledgeable of people in issuing *fatāwā*. He authored numerous books full of a wealth of information and I do not think that time has been generous in providing his like. He was humble with the elite and lay masses. He was of sound belief, and a man of patience, forbearance and dignity. His gathering would be filled with *fuqahā'*, the hadith scholars and people of good. At the end of his life, everyone began heading towards him. He was a man of great worship, someone who would always remain in tahajjud. His like was never seen, and he did not see anyone like him..."

It has reached me from someone else from Imām Abu'l-'Abbās ibn Taymiyya ﷺ, who said: "None has entered the Levant after al-Awzā'ī greater in *Fiqh* than Shaykh al-Muwaffaq." Ḥāfiẓ al-Ḍiyā' has written a separate biography of the shaykh in two volumes. Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī has also done the same.

Al-Ḍiyā' said: "...Our Shaykh al-'Imād would exalt Shaykh al-Muwaffaq a lot, supplicate for him and sit in front of him as a student sits in front of a scholar."

I have heard the Imām, the *mufti*, our Shaykh Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Ma'ālī ibn Ghunayma in Baghdad say: "I do not know anyone in our age who has reached the status of *ijtihād*, save al-Muwaffaq." I heard Abū 'Amr ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, the *mufti*, say: "I have not seen the like of Shaykh al-Muwaffaq."

Shaykh 'Abdullah al-Yūnīnī said: "I do not firmly believe that anyone from those that I saw was so complete in knowledge

and praiseworthy traits with which perfection could be attained save he. Surely he, may Allah have mercy on him, was perfect in appearance, and its meaning is beauty, kindness, forbearance, nobleness, knowledge of various sciences, beautiful manners, and various other issues in which I had seen none besides him perfect in. I had surely seen his excellent manners, beautiful conduct, plentiful forbearance, abundant knowledge, copious intelligence, perfect moral virtue, great sense of bashfulness, perpetual cheeriness, and relinquishment of himself from the world, the people of the world, lofty ranks and its people to an extent from which the major *walis* would be incapable of..."

Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī said: "Abū ʿAbdullah ibn Faḍl al-Aʿtākī said: "I said to myself, 'If I had the ability, I would build a *madrasa* for al-Muwaffaq and give him a thousand *dirhams* a day.' I then came after a few days and made *salām* to him. He looked at me, smiled and said: 'When a man intends something, then its reward is written for him.'"

Abu'l-Ḥasan ibn Ḥamdān al-Jarā'iḥī narrated: "I used to dislike the Ḥanābila on account of the foul words in relation to corrupt beliefs that were uttered against them. I then fell ill such that my limbs would suffer from cramp. I remained like this for seventeen days; I could not move and yearned for death. When it was time for 'Ishā', al-Muwaffaq came and recited some verses [of the Qur'ān] over me. He recited: *'We reveal the Qur'ān, which is cure and mercy for the believers; and it adds nothing to the unjust but loss.'* (17:82) He then wiped his hand over my back and I felt better. He then stood up and I said: 'Oh slave girl, open the door for him.' He replied: 'I shall go from where I came.' He then disappeared. I then stood at that

moment to go to the place of ablution. In the morning I went to the *jāmiʿ* [*masjid*] and offered prayer behind al-Muwaffaq. I then shook his hand, which he squeezed and said: 'Avoid saying things.' I said: 'Sorry, sometimes I say things.'"

The caretaker of the *jāmiʿ* of Damascus said: "He would spend the night in the *jāmiʿ* and doors would open for him and he would leave and return and they would lock as they were."

Al-ʿAfif Katā'ib ibn Aḥmad ibn Mahdī al-Bāniyāsī narrated a few days after Shaykh al-Muwaffaq's death: "I once saw Shaykh al-Muwaffaq at the bank of a river performing *wuḍū'*. When he had completed the *wuḍū'* he took hold of his wooden clogs and walked on the water to the other side. He then put his clogs on and climbed to the *madrasa*—meaning the *madrasa* of his brother Abū ʿUmar." Then Katā'ib swore by Allah: "I have surely seen him and there was no need for me to lie. I concealed this during his life." He was asked: "Did his feet submerge in water?" He replied: "No, it was as if he was walking on a carpet, may Allah have mercy on him."

I have read in the writings of al-Dhahabī: "I heard our companion Abū Ṭāhir Aḥmad al-Duraybī who said, I heard from Shaykh Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥātim—and I visited the grave of Shaykh al-Muwaffaq along with him—say: 'I heard the *faqīh* Muḥammad al-Yūnīnī, our shaykh, say: "I saw Shaykh al-Muwaffaq walking on water."[111]

111— In his footnotes to Ibn Rajab's *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila*, Shaykh 'Abdur Raḥmān ibn Sulaymān al-ʿUthaymīn often frivolously negates the *karāmat* of the *awliyā'*. For example, in reference to Shaykh al-Muwaffaq's walking on water, Shaykh al-ʿUthaymīn writes: "This is a falsehood from the whisperings of Satan." Imām al-Ṭahāwī, while outlining the 'aqīda of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'a writes: "We believe in what we know of the *karāma* or marvels of the *awliyā'* and in the authentic stories about them from trustworthy sources." Such unnecessary comments can be found saturated throughout this particular edition. (IN)

Shaykh al-Muwaffaq, may Allah have mercy on him, has compiled many sound books in regards to the *madhhab*, both in terms of the peripherals (*furūʿ*) and principles (*uṣūl*), and also in hadith, language, and asceticism and *raqāʾiq* narrations.[112] His books on the principles of religion are excellent; the majority of them are according to the way of the Imāms from among the hadith scholars and full of aḥādīth and *āthār* with the chains of narrators as is the way of Imām Aḥmad and the Imāms of hadith...

The Muslims in general and the people of the *madhhab* especially have benefitted from his book. They have spread and become famous on account of his good intention and sincerity in writing them; this is especially the case in relation to *Al-Mughnī*; benefit from it has been great and it has been greatly praised.

Ḥāfiẓ al-Ḍiyāʾ has said: "I saw Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal in a dream and he dictated a question of *Fiqh* to me. I said: This is in *Al-Khiraqī*. He then said: 'Your companion, al-Muwaffaq, has not fallen short in explaining [*Mukhtasar*] *al-Khiraqī*.

I have read in the writing of Ḥāfiẓ al-Dubaythī who said: "I heard Shaykh ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Maqdisī (I say that al-Maqdisī has granted me *ijāza* in this) who said: I heard our Shaykh Abu'l-ʿAbbās Ibn Taymiyyah (al-Dhahabī said, and I think I heard our Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah) say: Shaykh Tāj al-Dīn ʿAbdur Raḥmān ibn Ibrāhīm al-Fazārī said: 'Shaykh ʿIzz al-Dīn ʿAbdus Salām, our shaykh, used to send me to borrow *Al-Muḥallā*[113] and *Al-Mujallā* from Ibn ʿArabī.' He said that

112— The *raqāʾiq* Hadith narrations is a genre of Hadith that have a tendency to soften hearts and inspire people to lead pious lives. (IN)

113— Al-Muḥallā (*Al-Kitāb al-Muḥalla bi'l-Āthār*) is a commentary by Ibn Ḥazm al-Andalūsī al-Ẓāhirī (d. 455 AH) of his own book *Al-Mujallā*. These are books of *Fiqh* in which the author cites the views of earlier scholars along with their evidence. Ibn Ḥazm was born in Cordoba. (IN)

Shaykh ʿIzz al-Dīn would say: 'I have not seen in the books of Islam in knowledge the like of *Al-Muḥallā*, *Al-Mujallā* and the book *Al-Mughnī* by Shaykh Muwaffaq al-Dīn ibn Qudāma in excellence and the research of that which is therein.'"

...he, may Allah have mercy on him, died on Saturday, the day of Eid al-Fiṭr in the year 620 AH at his home in Damascus. He was prayed over the next day and taken to the foot of Mount Qasioun where he was buried. A throng of people had gathered for him; people had spread as far as the paths within the mountain and filled them.

Abu'l-Maẓaffar Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī said that Ismāʿīl ibn Ḥammād al-Kātib al-Baghdādī said: "I saw on the night of Eid al-Fiṭr as if the *muṣḥaf* of ʿUthmān ﷺ was raised from the *jāmiʿ* of Damascus to the sky and great sorrow overcame me. Al-Muwaffaq died on the day of Eid."

He said that Aḥmad ibn Saʿd, the brother of Muḥammad ibn Saʿd al-Kātib al-Maqdisī, saw a dream and that this Aḥmad was from among the righteous. Aḥmad said: "On the day of Eid I saw angels descending from the skies together saying: 'Descend by turns.' I said: 'What is this?' They replied: 'They are transferring the pure soul of al-Muwaffaq in the pure body.'"

He also said that ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad al-ʿAlawī said: "I saw as if the Prophet ﷺ had passed away and he was buried in [Mount] Qasioun on the day of Eid al-Fiṭr." He added: "We were on the Mountain of Banī Hilāl and saw a great light on Qasioun on the day of Eid. We thought Damascus was on fire and that the people of the village had come out to see. News then reached that al-Muwaffaq had passed away on the day of Eid and had been buried at [Mount] Qasioun, may Allah have mercy on him."

10. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab mentions in *Al-Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part 2, p. 52):

Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Qudāma ibn Miqdām ibn Naṣr in ʿAbdullah al-Jammāʿīlī al-Maqdisī, then al-Dimashqi al-Ṣalīḥī, the ascetic, the worshipper, the shaykh, Abū ʿUmar…

His nephew (from his sister), Ḥāfiẓ Ḍiyā' al-Dīn said: "… he was born in 528 AH." Abu'l-Faraj ibn al-Ḥanbalī said: "The shaykh memorized the Qur'ān and recited it according to the way of Abū ʿAmr. He heard hadith from his father, Abu'l-Makārim ibn Hilāl, Abū Tamīm Salmān ibn al-Raḥbī … Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbdul Ghanī al-Maqdisī selected for him forty hadiths from his narrations which he narrated."

A large group of people has heard hadith from him. Among them there is al-Ḍiyā' and al-Mundhirī. Ibn Khalīl and his son Abu'l-Faraj ʿAbdur Raḥmān, the chief justice (*qāḍī al-quḍāt*), have narrated from him and he (the latter) memorized *Mukhtaṣar al-Khiraqī* in *Fiqh* from him…

Ḥāfiẓ al-Ḍiyā' said: "Allah had gathered for him the understanding of *Fiqh*, *farā'id* (laws of inheritance) and *naḥw* along with asceticism, acting on knowledge and fulfilling the needs of people."

He said: "No sooner had he heard a *duʿā'* but he memorized it and would supplicate with it and no sooner had he heard the mention of a prayer but he would pray it and no sooner had he heard a hadith but he would act upon it. He would pray one hundred *rakaʿa* with the people in the middle of Shaʿbān and this was when he was a very old man; it was as if he was the most energetic of the congregation. He did not abandon the

prayer of the night from the time of his youth. He travelled with a group and remained awake during the night, offering *Salah* and guarding the group. He lessened consumption of food in the illness before his death until he became like a slender piece of wood. He died while counting on his fingers the *tasbīḥ*." He said: "His wife narrated to me, she said: 'He would spend the night awake in prayer and when sleep would overcome him, he would have a small stick which he would use to hit his legs so that he would not feel sleepy.'" He said: "He fasted a great deal, while travelling and at home."

His son ʿAbdullah said: "Towards the end of his life he continued to fast and so his family reprimanded him. He said: 'I only fast because I value my days. If I were to become weak then I would be unable to fast and if I were to die then my actions would stop.' No sooner had he heard of a funeral but he would attend it, or of a sick person but he would visit, or of a jihād but he would leave for it. He would recite in prayer each night a seventh [portion of the Qurʾān] in the *tartīl* mode of recitation. He would also recite a seventh between Ẓuhr and ʿAṣr. Once he had completed the Fajr prayer he would recite the *Āyāt al-Ḥirṣ*[114] after completing the *tasbīḥ*. He had written a booklet regarding this that would hang from the *miḥrāb*. At times he would recite from that fearing he would fall asleep. He would then recite [the Qurʾān] and teach until the sun shone brightly and would then offer the *Ṣalāt al-Ḍuḥā* for a long time. He would offer two very long prayers—one during the night and the second

114—The *Āyāt al-Ḥirṣ* are thirty three verses from the Qurʾān also known in the Indian Sub-Continent as the *Manzil*. (IN)

during the day. He would lengthen the prostrations in them both. He would pray *salah* after the *adhān* of Ẓuhr before its Sunnah two *rakaʿa* every day. He would recite in the first *Sūrah al-Muʾminūn* and the second *Sūrah al-Furqān*. He would pray between Maghrib and ʿIshāʾ four *rakaʿa* in which he would recite *Sūrah al-Sajda*, *Sūrah Yāsīn*, *Sūrah Tabārak* and *Sūrah al-Dukhān*. He would pray the *Ṣalāt al-Tasbīḥ* every Friday night between Maghrib and ʿIshāʾ and he would lengthen it. On the day of Friday he would offer two *rakaʿa* in which he would pray one hundred *Qul Huw-Allahu Aḥad*. Each day and night he would pray seventy-two supererogatory (*nafl*) *rakaʿa* and he had many *awrād*. He would visit graves each Friday after ʿAṣr prayer and would only sleep in the state of *wuḍūʾ*. He was meticulous with the Sunnahs and litanies to be prayed at the time of sleeping, this would include the *tasbīḥ*, *takbīr* and *taḥmīd*, and reciting *Sūrat Tabārak*, etc. from the Qurʾān. He would say between the Sunnah prayer of Fajr and the *farḍ* prayers forty times *Ya Ḥayyu, Ya Qayyūm, La Ilāha Illā Anta*... He would say: 'There is no [beneficial] knowledge save that which enters the grave with its bearer...' When he would deliver a speech hearts would soften and some people would cry immensely. He possessed great awe in the hearts [of people], so much so that one of the students wanted to ask him regarding something but he could not find the courage to ask. When he would enter the mosque then people would become silent and lower their voices. When he would pass along streets then children playing would flee, and when he ordered something then no one would be bold enough to do the contrary... One year the people were in need of rain and so he climbed with them to

Maghāra al-Damm,[115] and with him were the females of his household. He performed the Salāt al-Istisqā' (Prayer for Rain) and supplicated. It rained at that very moment and the wadis overflowed in a way that the people had not seen for some time. He performed many miracles.

Some of them said: "We came to him once and we were three hungry souls. He presented us with a small bowl in which there was milk and crushed bread. We ate and were filled and I looked inside and it was as if the [contents] had not lessened."

Al-Ḍiyā' said that he heard Imām Muḥammad ibn Abū Bakr ibn ʿUmar say: "The shaykh once invited me at a time that I feared food would harm [my health]. He began with me and said: 'When a man, before eating, reads [the Qur'ānic verse] *Allah is witness that there is no God save Him...* [3:18] and *Because of the familiarity of the Quraysh...* [106:1] and then eats, then it shall not harm him.'"

I heard Imām Abū Bakr ʿAbdullah ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Naḥḥās say: "My father used to love Shaykh Abū ʿUmar and so said to me one Friday: 'I pray Jumʿa behind the shaykh; it is my *madhhab* that *bismillah* is a part of the [*Sūrah*] *al-Fātiha* and it is his that it is not from *Al-Fātiha*. I fear that there might be something [wrong] in my *ṣalāt*.' We went to the *masjid* and found the shaykh. He made *salām* with my father, embraced him and then said: 'Oh my brother, pray and remain of pure heart for I have certainly not left the *bismillah* in a

115— The Maghāra al-Damm (The Grotto of Blood) is a cave situated on the side of Mount Qasioun in Damascus. This place is also known as the Maghāra al-Arbaʿīn (The Grotto of the Forty Abdāl) and is said to be the place where Qābīl killed Hābil. The Damascenes would often visit this point to supplicate their needs, especially at the time of drought. (IN)

supererogatory (*nafl*) or obligatory (*farḍ*) prayer since I began leading people.' My father then turned to me and said: 'Remember this well.'"

Some people used to send things to the shaykh each year and he would accept. Someone sent him two dinars once and he returned them. This caused the person pain and he began thinking about them and realized that they had been acquired through impure means. The person sent two other dinars and he accepted them.

Al-Ḍiyā' said: I heard Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdul Malik ibn ʿUthmān say: "Two men came to Shaykh Abū ʿUmar and said to him: 'Qurāḥ has taken such a person and detained him. Supplicate against him.' The two men spent the night with the shaykh. The next morning the shaykh said: 'The need has been fulfilled.' All of a sudden the funeral of Qurāḥ passed by."

Al-Ḍiyā' has written a lengthy biography of Shaykh Abū ʿUmar and likewise so has Abu'l-Muẓaffar Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī in *Al-Mir'āt*. He writes: "He was of medium height, beautiful face and on him was the *nūr* of worship. He would always remain smiling. He was slim due to plenty of fasting and standing in prayer."

...his brother al-Muwaffaq said regarding him: "He was our shaykh, he brought us up (*tarbiya*) and was good to us. He taught us and toiled hard for us. He was for the group like a father in fulfilling their needs... he would give us priority and leave his family in need. He built a *madrasa* and a building due to his lofty zeal. He was one whose prayers would be answered. He would not write an amulet for fever except Allah Most High would cure that person."

Abu'l-Muẓaffar said: "His miracles were many and his virtues were abundant..." He said: "I was afflicted by colic and was in great pain because of it when Abū ʿUmar entered upon me and in his hand were carob pods that had been pounded. He said: 'Swallow this.' There was around me a group of people who said this would cause the colic to increase and worsen. I did not pay heed to their saying, took it from his hand and ate it. I was cured immediately." He said: Jamāl al-Buṣrāwī, the one who would deliver sermons, said: "I was afflicted by colic in Ramaḍān and they tried [to convince me to] break the fast which I would not do. I climbed Mount Qasioun and sat at the place where the *jāmiʿ* [*masjid*] is today. There was Shaykh Abū ʿUmar heading for the mountain and in his hand were some herbs. He said; 'Smell this, it shall benefit you.' I took it and smelt it and was cured."

I read in the writings of Nāṣiḥ ibn al-Ḥanbalī: "Abū ʿUmar was a jurist (*faqīh*), ascetic and worshipper; he wrote with his own hand many books of hadith and *Fiqh* according to the *madhhab* of Imām Aḥmad and his brother's book *al-Mughnī*. Along with that which he preoccupied himself were the many units of prayer and recitation that he would complete. He performed Hajj and went to battle and was the shaykh of his group; they obeyed him, and he was respected by Nūr al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Zengī. He visited him and built for him a *masjid* and a place for drinking water in the mountain.

Others apart from him said: "There are beautiful monuments of his including his *madrasa* in the mountain, which is an endowment for [the service] of the Qur'ān and *Fiqh*. A vast group of people who cannot be enumerated memorized the

Qurʾān there." A group of people mentioned that Abū ʿUmar was a *quṭub* and remained the *quṭub al-waqt* (*quṭub* of the era) for six years prior to his demise.

Abu'l-Muẓaffar said: "He was on the *madhhab* of the pious predecessors, of excellent creed (*ʿaqīda*), and firm on the Book and the Sunnah, etc. and the narrated ways as they came without slandering the Imāms of the faith and the *ʿulamāʾ* of the Muslims. He would forbid from remaining in the company of the innovators and would order that one remains in the company of the pious...

"He, may Allah Most High have mercy on him, passed away and was bathed before the breaking of dawn (*saḥr*). From among those who reached the water with which he was washed, there were women who rubbed it with their veils and men with their turbans. None from among the judges, the *ʿulamāʾ*, the rulers, notables and ordinary people remained behind from his funeral. It was a day to be witnessed. When they left the convent (*dayr*), it was an extremely hot day. A cloud came and provided shade to the people till his grave and a humming sound like the humming of bees could be heard from it. If it were not for the reliable swordsmen, brave groups of warriors and soldiers of the state, nothing of his shroud would have reached his grave. They circled him with swords and spears. The night before his death, a person saw a dream as if Qasioun had fallen or moved from its place and they interpreted it as his death. When he was buried, some of the pious people saw the Prophet ﷺ in their dreams that night saying: 'Whoever saw Abū ʿUmar on the night preceding the Friday, it is as if he has seen the Kaʿba. Take off your slippers before you reach him.' He

died at the age of eighty and did not leave a dinar or a dirham, or anything little or more. Others said those who attended his funeral estimated that there were twenty thousand people."

Al-Ḍiyā' narrated from ʿAbd al-Mawlā ibn Muḥammad that he used to recite the *Sūrah al-Baqarah* by the grave of the shaykh. He was alone when he reached the verse: "*Not too old, nor too young.*" (2:68) ʿAbd al-Mawlā said: "I made a mistake and the shaykh replied from the grave." He said: "I felt scared and afraid, I shivered and stood up." He then died a few days later. This is a famous story.

Abū Shāma[116] mentions in his appendix: "The first time I stood at his grave and visited him, I found, through the *tawfīq* of Allah Most High, a lot of warm heartedness and a pious feeling to cry. With me was my companion and he is the one who showed me his grave and felt the same..."

His father, Shaykh Abu'l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad, the *khaṭīb* (orator) of Jammāʿīl, was a pious man, an ascetic, a worshipper, and a man of miracles, spiritual states, worship and sacrifices (for faith). In Ramaḍān he would complete sixty-five recitations of the Qur'ān. He possessed great awe, none would see him except kiss his hand.

Abu'l-Faraj ibn al-Ḥanbalī said: "He was proficient in worship and piety. I heard my father say: 'If a prophet is to be sent in the time of Shaykh Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Qudāma, then it would be him. His two sons have narrated [hadith] from him: Abū ʿUmar and al-Muwaffaq..."

116— Abū Shāma, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (1203-1268 CE) was an Iraqi historian who was born in Damascus. He wrote various books on several subjects, including seven on history. These include: *Al-Rawḍatayn*, a history of Nūr al-Dīn and Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's periods; the *ʿUyūn*, a summary of *Al-Rawḍatayn*; and an appendix to it entitled *Al-Mudhayyal ʿalā al-Rawḍatayn*. (IN)

11. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab mentions in *Al-Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part 2, p. 304):

ʿAbdur Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Qudāma al-Maqdisī al-Jammāʿīlī (in terms of origin) al-Ṣāliḥī, the jurist, the ascetic, the orator, the chief justice, the shaykh al-Islam, the light of the faith (*shams al-dīn*), Abū Muḥammad, Abu'l-Faraj ibn Shaykh Abū ʿUmar…

He was revered by the elite and lay masses; he commanded great awe among kings and others; he was a man of many virtues and good qualities, and was firm in piety and abstinence from that which is unlawful. The hadith scholar Ismāʿīl ibn al-Khabbāz has compiled his biography and information about him in one hundred and fifty chapters and done well. Whenever he has praised him in relation to *Fiqh* or asceticism or humility he has supported that which he has cited with long and strong chains of narrations…

Al-Dhahabī writes in his index of his shaykhs in the biography of *shams al-dīn*: "The shaykh of the Ḥanbalīs, rather the shaykh al-Islam, the jurist of the Levant, the model of worship and the unique individual of his age. He on whose praise and tribute tongues are united. He narrated [hadith] for around over sixty years and Abu'l-Fatḥ ibn al-Ḥājib wrote from him…"

Al-Dhahabī wrote: "Shaykh Muḥy al-Dīn—i.e. al-Nawawī—said: 'He was the greatest of my shaykhs…' I say: Shaykh Muḥy al-Dīn has narrated from him in the book *Al-Rukhsa fi'l-Qiyām* and written: 'The shaykh, the Imām, the *ʿālim*, he whose *Imāma*, excellence and greatness was agreed upon, the *faqīh*, Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdur Raḥmān, the son of

the shaykh, the Imām, the *ʿālim*, he who acted on knowledge, the ascetic, Abū ʿUmar al-Maqdisī, may Allah be pleased with him.'"

Al-Dhahabī wrote: "Shaykh Zayn al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdul Dā'im has also narrated from him, and he was greater than him and of greater *sanad* than he." He has also mentioned him in his *Tārīkh* [*al-Islām*] *al-Kabīr* and lengthened his biography and mentioned his virtues, worship, litanies (*awrād*), kindness, his widespread benefit and that he performed the Hajj thrice. On the final occasion he saw the Prophet ﷺ in a dream asking for him and so he performed the Hajj that year. He attended a number of conquests. He was of tender heart, one who would cry easily, noble in spirit, one who would constantly remain in the *dhikr* of Allah and spend the night standing, one who safeguarded the prayer offered after the rising of the sun (*ḍuḥā*) and would read between the two night prayers (Maghrib and ʿIshā') whatever he could. He would give away the gifts he would receive from kings, etc. He was humble in front of the masses and would hold himself up in front of kings. His gathering was full of jurists, the hadith scholars and the people of religion. Allah placed his love in the hearts of the creation; there was none in his age who would offer *salah* more beautifully than he and nor with such perfect humility (*khushūʿ*). He would supplicate a lot and would do so earnestly, especially at those places where it is hoped prayers are answered and after reciting the verses of *Al-Ḥirṣ* in the *jāmiʿ* [*masjid*] after the ʿIshā' prayer. He was meticulous in looking after the concerns of people. He would not learn of an ill person but would visit, nor would anyone from the mountain pass away but he would follow [the bier]..."

Al-Birzālī writes in his [book] *Tārīkh*: "The shaykh was the shaykh of his time, the blessing of the age. He took charge of the judiciary, the delivering of sermons, the leadership position (*mashīkha*) and lecturing for a lengthy period..."

Al-Yūnīnī[117] has written in his history: "He was the *shaykh al-Islam* in knowledge, asceticism, piety, abstinence from that which is unlawful, and trustworthiness. He was of great worth and had immense qualities... he was unique in his era in the number of excellent qualities and unique in praiseworthy traits. There was none on par with him in terms of his manners, spiritual exercises and that on which he was. Many people benefitted from him. He was on the way of the pious predecessors in the majority of his ways.

"Many people studied under the shaykh, may Allah have mercy on him. Among those who took knowledge from him was Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Taymiyyah and Shaykh Majd al-Dīn Ismāʿīl ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥarrānī who used to say: 'I have not seen with my eyes the like of him...'"

Al-Dhahabī said: "And I saw[118] the demise of Shaykh Shams al-Dīn ibn Abū ʿUmar in a letter from our shaykh, Shaykh al-Islam Taqī al-Dīn ibn Taymiyyah. Among that which he wrote was this: 'Our shaykh, the Imām, the master of the people of Islam in his era, the *quṭub* of the realm of mankind

117— Quṭub al-Dīn Abu'l-Fatḥ Mūsā ibn Muḥammad ibn Abū al-Ḥusayn Aḥmad al-Yūnīnī al-Baʿlabakkī (640 AH -726 AH). Al-Yūnīnī was a Levantine historian during the Mamluk period and author of a number of books: *Mukhtaṣar Mir'āt al-Zamān*, *Dhayl Mir'āt al-Zamān* and *Manāqib al-Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī*. (IN)

118— It is poignant to note that Al-Dhahabī has used the word "see" to emphasise the vivid manner in which Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah captured the actual passing of the shaykh in his letter. (IN)

(*falak al-anām*) in his age, he who was unique absolutely and absolutely, unequalled in excellence in that period truly and truly, a possessor of an array of excellent traits, free and clear from all shortcomings and faults, and one who gathered the attributes of knowledge and forbearance, virtuous deeds and noble lineage, intelligence and erudition, external looks and internal excellent manners. He was of pure manners and praiseworthy actions while keeping the heart and disposition free from rancor, [and had] gentleness, softness, pious intentions and pure thoughts so much that if an obstinate person were to seek a fault then this would be difficult for him…' He continued: 'Eyes completely wept over him, and his loss affected all groups and denominations. Which tear was it that did not flow? Which limb was it that was not severed? Which excellent trait was it that has not been lost? Oh! He was of such matters, how great were they? He was of such a time, how valuable was it? His [demise] is a calamity, how terrible it is?' He has mentioned him a lot…"

12. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab mentions in *Al-Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part 2, p. 329):

Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad ibn Faḍl al-Wāsiṭī al-Ṣāliḥī, the jurist, the ascetic, the worshipper, the *shaykh al-Islam*, the blessing of the Levant, the *quṭub* of the age, Taqī al-Dīn, Abū Isḥāq…

Al-Dhahabī said: "I have read regarding him in the writings of ʿAllāma Kamāl al-Dīn ibn al-Zamlakānī: 'He was of great ranking, made an impression on hearts, was sublime and held fast to worship night and day. He would do that which would

render others incapable. He would go to great lengths to forbid the wrong and would sell himself in that…'"

Al-Birzālī said: "He was unique in his lofty chain of narration (*isnād*) and vast number of narrations and forms of worship. His like has not been born."

13. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab mentions in *Al-Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part 2, p. 351):

ʿAlī ibn Masʿūd ibn Nafīs ibn ʿAbdullah al-Mūṣilī, then al-Ḥalabī, the sufi, the hadith scholar, the *Ḥāfiẓ* of hadith, the ascetic, Abu'l-Ḥasan, he who was resident in Damascus… he focused totally on hadith and his recitation [of the Qur'ān] was *mufassara*[119] and beautiful. He extracted principles (*uṣul* of *Fiqh*) and would go hungry and buy books. He was chaste and would suffice on pieces of bread as a result of which he became ill-tempered along with being God fearing and pious. He was a jurist according to the *madhhab* of [Imām] Aḥmad from which he would cite. He gave his books and manuscripts away as an endowment. Al-Dhahabī and a group of individuals narrated and heard hadith from him.

He died in Safar in 704 AH at the small hospital in Damascus. He was taken to the foot of Mount Qasioun and was buried there in front of the *zāwiya* of Ibn Qawwām.

Shaykh Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Taymiyyah and a group of individuals followed his funeral, may Allah Most High have mercy on him.

119— In a Hadith narrated by al-Tirmidhī and al-Nasā'ī, Umm Salama ﵂ is asked regarding the recitation and the prayer of the Prophet ﷺ. Having described his prayer, Umm Salama said his recitation was "a recitation made clear (*mufassara*) letter by letter". (IN)

14. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab mentions in *Al-Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part 2, p. 353):

Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdullah ibn ʿUmar ibn Abu'l-Qāsim al-Baghdādī, the reciter of the Qur'ān (*al-muqrī'*), the hadith scholar, the sufi, the writer, Rashīd al-Dīn, Abū ʿAbdullah ibn Abu'l-Qāsim... he focused on hadith and heard the major books and various chapters. He wrote by hand various chapters, works of calligraphy and many lengthy books. His writing was extremely beautiful and he compiled for himself a group of weak *subāʿiyyāt*[120] from Khirāsh and others. He was a *ʿālim* and pious, and from among the best of the people of Baghdad and their noteworthy people. He was a man of gentleness, ease and excellent manners, and from among the people of ranking and equity. He took charge of the Ribāṭ al-Ajwāniyya on the Darb Rākhī road in Baghdad and also the Dār al-hadith al-Mustanṣirīyya. He wore the mantle of Taṣawwuf from the Suhrawardis. He narrated much. A large group of people from Baghdad and [other] visitors [to the city] heard [hadith] from him. Lofty chains of narration (*isnād*) were his and we heard from a group of his companions in Baghdad and Damascus...

15. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab mentions in *Al-Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part 2, p. 382):

ʿAbdullah ibn ʿAbdul Ḥalīm ibn ʿAbdus Ṣalām ibn ʿAbdullah ibn Abu'l-Qāsim ibn al-Khaḍir ibn Muḥammad ibn Taymiyyah al-Ḥarrānī, then al-Dimashqī, the jurist, the Imām, the ascetic, the worshipper, the exemplar, he who was skilled in

120— *Subāʿiyyāt* or Seveners are types of Hadiths in which there are seven narrators between the last narrator and the Prophet ﷺ (IN)

various branches of learning, Sharaf al-Dīn, Abū Muḥammad, the brother of Shaykh Taqī al-Dīn... He was a man of truth and sincerity, someone who would suffice on a little; he was of noble temperament, brave and bold, a *mujāhid*, ascetic (*zāhid*), a worshipper and God-fearing. He would leave his house at night and return at night. He would never sit at a fixed place that people may head there to meet him. Rather, he would lodge in abandoned mosques outside the town where he would withdraw for prayer and *dhikr*. He was one who would remain in worship, devotion, meditation and the fear of Allah Most High a lot. He was a man of miracles and *kashf*.

Among that which is renowned regarding him is that he would give a lot of *ṣadaqa* and, in spite of his poverty and lack of means, give preference to others in giving away gold and silver while at home and when travelling. [Once] his companion in his caravan searched his saddlebag and found nothing. He then saw him giving away huge amounts of gold. This is something famous and well known regarding him. He performed Hajj a number of times...

Al-Dhahabī has mentioned him in *Al-Muʿjam al-Mukhtaṣar*: "He knew a lot of the defects (*ʿilal*) in hadiths and their narrators. He was an eloquent writer and was a scholar of Arabic..."

He has also mentioned him in his *Muʿjam al-Shuyūkh*: "He was an Imām, erudite, a jurist, a knower of the *madhhab*, its principles (*uṣūl*) and the principles of religiosity. He also knew the finer points of Arabic, the laws of inheritance, maths and astronomy... his colloquies were excellent; he was humble, a person of great worship and goodness, a possessor of great truth, sincerity, focus and knowledge of Allah (*ʿirfān*);

he would totally separate himself from people and would suffice with simple clothes."

He, may Allah Most High have mercy on him, passed away on Wednesday, 14th of Jumada al-Ula, 727 AH, in Damascus. He was prayed over in the afternoon at the *jāmiᶜ* [*masjid*]. He was carried to the gate of the citadel and was prayed over there again once more. His brother, Shaykh Taqī al-Dīn and Zayn al-Dīn ᶜAbdur Raḥmān who were imprisoned in the citadel prayed over him along with a group of people who were with them inside the citadel. The *takbīr* reached them. Weeping intensified at that moment; it was a time to be seen. He was prayed over a third and a fourth time and was carried on heads and fingers to the Maqābir al-Ṣūfiyya (The Sufi Cemetery) and buried there. A great number of people attended his funeral; he was immensely praised and mourned—may Allah have mercy on him.

16. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab mentions in *Al-Dhayl ᶜalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part 2, p. 349):

Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ᶜAbdul Karīm al-Raqqī,[121] the ascetic, the scholar (*ᶜālim*), the exemplar, the man of Allah (*rabbānī*), Abū Isḥāq…

Al-Dhahabī said: "He was an Imām, an ascetic, a knower of Allah, an exemplar and the master of the people of his era.

121— Al-Raqqī is attributed to the city of al-Raqqā or Raqqa, a city in northern Syria on the north bank of the Euphrates. When translating this passage some years ago, I spent some time looking this up as the city was not well known then. Due to the unabated conflict that continues to plague Syria today and the subsequent media coverage, Raqqa is well known today, albeit for the wrong reasons. May Allah Most High through His intimate mercy give respite to the people of Syria, alleviate their pain and suffering, and enable a peaceful solution to the conflict that continues unabated there. (IN)

He wrote many books on exhortations (*waʿẓ*), the path to Allah Most High, hadith and sermons. He also has an excellent poem. He is a man worthy that one travels distances to meet him. In his words there was consensus (*ijmāʿ*). He would at times attend gatherings of *samāʿ* and enter into *wajd*. He had a close connection with Sulaymān al-Kallāb, a man who would mix with dogs and not pray. He was wrong in this but was an expert in many sciences. Our Shaykh Kamāl al-Dīn—i.e. ibn al-Zamlakānī—has written regarding him in detail and written his biography well.

17. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab mentions in *Al-Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part 2, p. 338):

ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn Abu'l-Qāsim ibn ʿUthmān ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Bābaṣrī, the jurist, the excellent writer, the Sufi, ʿIzz al-Dīn, Abū Muḥammad, he who is resident in Damascus... Al-Dhahabī said: "He lived in Damascus and resided at the *khānqah*. He was a jurist, a scholar and pious." He wrote in his book on history: "He was a scholar of *Fiqh*, expert in literature and poetry and the battles of the Arabs prior to Islam (*ayyām al-nās*). His eyesight became weak and he sought from the group that they listen from him that he may acquire the blessings (*baraka*) of hadith."

18. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab mentions in *Al-Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part 2, p. 282):

ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Abū Saʿd ibn Waḍḍāḥ al-Sharābānī, then al-Baghdādī, the jurist, the hadith scholar, the ascetic, the writer, Kamāl al-Dīn, Abu'l-Ḥasan ibn Abū Bakr... He heard hadith from the shaykh, the knower of

Allah (*ʿārif*) ʿAlī ibn Idrīs al-Yaʿqūbī and from him donned the *khirqa*. He benefitted from him and heard hadith in Erbil and other places…

He was one of those who narrated a lot; he heard a lot from the major books and other smaller ones, this was through his own reading and the reading of others. He undertook *takhrīj* [of hadith] and authored a number of books…

The shaykh narrated a lot and a group of people narrated from him. Ibn Ḥusayn al-Fakhrī and Ḥāfiẓ al-Dimyāṭī in his *Muʿjam* have narrated from him…

Our Shaykh Ṣafī al-Dīn said: "His funeral was one of the famous funerals. A vast number of innumerable people gathered for it. The markets were shut that day. His coffin was tied with ropes and people carried him on their hands. He was prayed over at the place where clay pots are kept [in Baghdad]. He was buried close to the grave of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, may Allah be pleased with him, at his feet.

19. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab mentions in *Al-Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part 2, p. 284):

ʿAlī ibn ʿUthmān ibn ʿAbd al-Qādir ibn Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf ibn al-Wujūhī al-Baghdādī, the reciter [of the Qurʾān], the Sufi, the ascetic, Shams al-Dīn Abu'l-Ḥasan. He was one of the notable people of Baghdad in his era. He was born in Dhu'l-Hijjah, 582 AH, and read hadith in the presence of al-Fakhr al-Mūṣilī, the companion of Ibn Saʿdūn al-Qurtubī. He heard hadith from Ibn Rūzba, al-Suhrawardī and others. He was an expert of the Qurʾān, confirmed as an accurate transmitter [of hadith], devout, good and pious…

More than one person has informed me from Ẓāhir ibn al-Kāzrūnī that he said that Shaykh Rashīd al-Dīn ibn Abu'l-Qāsim narrated to me that ʿAdl Muḥibb al-Dīn Mūṣād-diq narrated to him: "I saw Ibn al-Wujūhī after his demise. I asked him: 'What did Allah do with you?' He replied: 'They (the two angels in the grave) came to me, sat me up and questioned me. I said, is this being said to the likes of Ibn al-Wujūhī? They then laid me to rest and left.'" May Allah have mercy on him.

20. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab mentions in *Al-Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part 2, p. 280):

Yūsuf ibn ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Baqqāl al-Baghdādī al-Ṣūfī, ʿAfīf al-Dīn, Abu'l-Ḥajjāj, the shaykh of the *ribāt* of al-Mar-zubāniyya. He was pious, a scholar, God-fearing and an ascetic. He has many books on *sulūk*, including *Sulūk al-Khawāṣ*... He gave *ijāza* to our Shaykh ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd al-Ṣamad al-Baghdādī...

21. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab mentions in *Al-Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part 2, p. 277):

Abu'l-Qāsim ibn Yūsuf ibn Abu'l-Qāsim ibn ʿAbdus Salām al-Umawī al-Ḥawwārī, the Sufi, the ascetic, he who was famous; the master at the *zāwiya* in Hawwarah.[122] He was good, pious, and had many followers, companions and *murīds* in many of the villages of Hawran[123] in Jubail[124] and al-Thabniyya.

122— Hawwarah is located in the Irbid region of modern day Jordan. (IN)

123— Hawran is an area located in southwestern Syria, extending into the northwestern corner of Jordan. The volcanic earth of Hawran makes it one of Syria's most fertile regions. (IN)

124— Jubail is the Arabic name of a Mediterranean city in Lebanon. It was known as Byblos under the Greek and Gebal under the Phonecians. It was also known as Gibelet during the Crusades. (IN)

He would not attend a [gathering of] *samāʿ* where there would be a drum.

22. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab mentions in *Al-Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part 2, p. 263):

Among those who were killed that year in Baghdad from our pious companions was the shaykh, the ascetic, the worshipper, Abu'l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Sulaymān ibn Abū al-ʿIzz al-Khabbāz (the Bread Maker). He was an ascetic, pious, of great worth, an exemplar and had many followers and *murīdīn*. He had a *zāwiya* in Baghdad, and was of many spiritual states (*aḥwāl*) and miracles.

Al-Dhahabī said: "Our Shaykh al-Dubāhī would describe and praise him. He had also heard from Shaykh ʿAlī ibn Abū Bakr ibn Idrīs al-Yaʿqūbī the ascetic and narrated from him." Al-Dimyāṭī heard from him and narrated from him in his *Muʿjam*. He also said: "He was martyred during the Tatar onslaught in the month of Muharram, 656 AH." It was said that he was left on a dunghill at the door of his *zāwiya* for three days until dogs ate from his flesh. He had also spoken of this during his life—may Allah be pleased with him. Mustanṣir Bi'llah would visit him; he would send Shaykh Muḥammad al-Rikāb home and he would bring bread with which Al-Mustanṣir Bi'llah would seek cure…

23. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab mentions in *Al-Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part 2, p. 262):

Yaḥyā ibn Yūsuf ibn Yaḥyā ibn Manṣūr ibn al-Muʿammar ibn ʿAbd al-Salām al-Anṣārī al-Ṣarṣarī al-Zarīrānī, he who was strong spirited, the jurist, the expert in literature, the

lexicologist, the poet, the ascetic, Jamāl al-Dīn Abū Zakariyyā, the poet of the age and the author of the *dīwān* in praise of the Prophet ﷺ which received widespread acceptance among people. He was the Ḥassān [ibn Thābit] of his age. He was born in the year 588 AH and recited the Qurʾān according to the various narrations under the companions of Ibn ʿAsākir al-Baṭāʾiḥī. He heard hadith from Shaykh ʿAlī ibn Idrīs al-Yaʿqūbī, the ascetic, the companion of Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir, remained with him, undertook *Sulūk* with him, and donned the *khirqa* from him. Shaykh ʿAbdul Mughīth al-Ḥarbī and others granted him *ijāza*. He memorized *Fiqh* and language well. It is said that he memorized the entire *Ṣiḥāḥ al-Jawharī*...

He was pious, an exemplar, someone who strove immensely hard, one who recited the Qurʾān a lot, chaste, patient, content with little, and a lover of the way of the *fuqarāʾ* and associating with them. He would attend [gatherings of] *samāʿ* with them and would give permission for that. He was firm on the Sunnah and would turn away from those who opposed it. His poems are full of principles of the Sunnah, praise of those who adhere to it and censure for those who oppose it. He also has a very long ode that rhymes in [the Arabic letter] *lām* in praise of Imām Aḥmad and his companions... He once saw the Prophet ﷺ in his dream and he gave him the glad tidings of death on the Sunnah. He composed a famous and long poem regarding this. And it happened so.

24. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab mentions in *Al-Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part 2, p. 151):

Muḥammad ibn al-Khaḍir ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Khaḍir ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbdullah ibn Taymiyyah al-Ḥarrānī, the jurist,

the exegete (*mufassir*), the orator (*khaṭīb*), the lecturer (*wāʿiẓ*), Fakhr al-Dīn Abū ʿAbdullah ibn Abu'l-Qāsim, the shaykh of Ḥarrān and its orator. He was born at the end of Shaʿbān in the year 542 AH in Ḥarrān and read the Qur'ān under his father when he was ten years old. His father was an ascetic and was considered among the *abdāl*. He became preoccupied with knowledge at a young age…

Shaykh Fakhr al-Dīn was a pious man; many miracles and extraordinary matters (*khawāriq*) have been mentioned regarding him. He was in charge of delivering sermons and leading prayers at the *jāmiʿ* [*masjid*] of Ḥarrān and teaching at the Madrasa al-Nūriyya there. He also built a *madrasa* in Ḥarrān.

Al-Nāṣiḥ ibn al-Ḥanbalī said: "The leadership of Ḥarrān was with him. He was responsible for the Friday sermon, leading prayers at the *jāmiʿ* and teaching at the Madrasa al-Nūriyya. He was the city's orator, and was accepted by its lay masses and was of standing among its kings. Among his pursuits was *tafsīr* and delivering lectures in an obvious and pious way.

25. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab mentions in *Al-Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part 2, p.5):

ʿAbdul Ghanī ibn ʿAbdul Wāḥid ibn ʿAlī ibn Surūr ibn Rāfiʿ ibn Ḥasan ibn Jaʿfar al-Jammāʿīlī al-Maqdisi, the *ḥāfiẓ*, the ascetic, Abū Muḥammad. He was given the title Taqī al-Dīn, he was the *Ḥāfiẓ* [of hadith] of that age and its hadith scholar (*muḥaddith*)…

He then travelled to Baghdad in the year 561 AH along with Shaykh al-Muwaffaq. They remained in Baghdad for four years. Al-Muwaffaq's inclination was to *Fiqh* and Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbdul

Ghanī's inclination was to hadith. They stayed with Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir[125] who would give them due consideration and was good to them. They both studied some hadith and *Fiqh* under him. Shaykh al-Muwaffaq narrated that they both remained with him for around forty days and that he then died. They would read to him each day two lessons in *Fiqh*. He (Shaykh al-Muwaffaq) would read from [*Mukhtaṣar*] *al-Khiraqī* from memory and Ḥāfiẓ would read from the book *Al-Hidāya*...

Ḥāfiẓ Ḍiyā' al-Dīn has gathered the excellence of the Ḥāfiẓ and his biography in two volumes. He has mentioned in there that the jurist, Makkī ibn ʿUmar ibn Niʿma al-Miṣrī has also collated his virtues. Ḥāfiẓ al-Ḍiyā' said: "Our shaykh, the Ḥāfiẓ, was such that one would hardly question him regarding a hadith, but he would mention and explain it. He would mention its veracity and weakness. He would not be asked regarding an individual except he would say: 'He is such a person, son of such a person, and then his title.' He would then mention his lineage."

I say that Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbdul Ghanī al-Maqdisī was the commander of the faithful (*amīr al-mu'minīn*) in hadith...

He (Ḥāfiẓ al-Ḍiyā') said: "He, may Allah have mercy on him, used to read hadith on Fridays after the prayer at the *jāmiʿ* [*masjid*] of Damascus and also on Thursday nights at the *jāmiʿ*. A vast number of people used to gather. He used to read and cry and make the people cry also. Such was the case that whoever attended his gathering once would never miss it again because

125— He is the *Imām rabbānī* and perpetual *quṭub* Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, the great Imām of the Sufis and he to whom all the Sufi *ṭuruq* return back to.

of how pleasant his heart would feel and how much delight he would feel. He would supplicate (*duʿā'*) a lot thereafter...

Al-Ḍiyā' said: "I heard the Imām, the ascetic, Ibrāhīm ibn Maḥmūd ibn Jawhar al-Ba'lī say he heard 'Imād, the brother of the Ḥāfiẓ, say: 'I have not seen anyone more careful with his time than Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbdul Ghanī.'"

Al-Ḍiyā' said: "Our shaykh, the Ḥāfiẓ, may Allah have mercy on him, would never unnecessarily waste any of his time. He would offer the Fajr prayer and teach the people the Qur'ān and I would at times read some hadith. We memorized from him the large quantities of hadiths that we received. He would then stand, perform *wuḍū'* and offer three hundred *rakaʿa* reciting the [*Surah*] *al-Fātiḥa* and the *al-Muʿawwidhatayn*[126] until before the time of Ẓuhr. He would then sleep a little until the time of Ẓuhr. He would preoccupy himself with either listening to hadith or transcribing texts until Maghrib. If he was fasting, he would break fast after Maghrib and if he was not then he would pray *salah* from Maghrib until 'Ishā'. Once he had prayed the 'Ishā' prayer, he would sleep until the middle of the night or after. He would then awaken as if a person had awoken him, perform *wuḍū'* and pray *salah* for a while. He would then perform *wuḍū'* and pray likewise. He would then perform *wuḍū'* and pray close to Fajr... he would then sleep a little until Fajr and this was his habit..."

... Al-Ḍiyā' said: "Allah had placed awe for him in the hearts of people..." He (Abū Muḥammad Faḍā'il ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Surūr al-Maqdisī) also said: "I know none from

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126— The *Al-Muʿawwidhatayn* is an Arabic term referring to the last two *surahs* of the Qur'ān: *Surah al-Falaq* and *Surah al-Nās*. (IN)

the Ahl al-Sunnah who saw Ḥāfiẓ except he would love him a great deal and praise him immensely."

I heard Abu'l-Thanā' Maḥmūd ibn Salama al-Ḥarrānī in Isfahan say: "In Isfahan, people stood in rows looking at Ḥāfiẓ." I also heard him say: "If Ḥāfiẓ was to take up residence in Isfahan for a time and intended to rule it, then he would do so, i.e. due to their love for him and eagerness for him. When he finally reached Egypt, we were there. When he would leave for the *jāmiʿ* [*masjid*] on Friday we would be unable to walk along with him due to the large number of people who would gain blessing (*tabarruk*) from him and gather around him."

...I heard Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdur Raḥmān ibn Ibrāhīm al-Maqdisī say: "I asked Ḥāfiẓ that miracles are narrated from these shaykhs that are not narrated from the *ʿulamā'*. What is the reason behind this? He replied: 'The preoccupation of the *ʿulamā'* with knowledge is [equal to] many miracles,' or he said: 'Do you wish for the *ʿulamā'* a miracle greater than their preoccupation with knowledge?' The Ḥāfiẓ carried out many miracles."

Al-Ḍiyā' said: "I heard Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdullah ibn ʿAlī al-ʿIrāqī who said that Abū Muḥammad ibn Abū ʿAbdullah al-Dimyāṭī narrated to me: 'I hired a ship and then saw it was faulty and became upset. I mentioned this to the Ḥāfiẓ who wrote me a letter and said: "Leave it inside. When you finish your journey and have left it, then take the letter and do not leave it inside." I went along and hung it in the ship and went off in our journey. Once we had alighted from it and had disembarked our fabric and there was nothing left inside, I remembered the letter and so I took it. At that moment, water entered the ship and it sunk.'"

... I heard Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdur Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdul Jabbār al-Muqrī say: "My family had a pair of clothes that belonged to the Ḥāfiẓ which they had stored [to place in the shroud] at death and a blanket that belonged to his mother. All the clothes that were in our house were stolen and my family searched for the clothes [belonging to Ḥāfiẓ] and the blanket and did not find them. They became sorrowful by this. After some time, they found them in a chest. They had searched for them before and had not found them."

Al-Diyā' said: "A group and I were listening [to hadith] in the presence of the Ḥāfiẓ at the place of prayer in our mountain in the height of summer. He said: 'Let us leave this heat and head for the *masjid*.' We intended to stand and perhaps some of us had stood up, when all of a sudden there was a cloud that had covered the sun. He then said: 'Sit.' I saw some of our companions looking at one another and quietly saying among each other that this is a miracle. They said: 'A cloud couldn't be seen in the sky.'" Al-Ḍiyā' has mentioned many of these types of stories. He also said: "I heard the Ḥāfiẓ say: 'I saw the Prophet ﷺ in a dream walking and I was treading behind him, except there was someone between me and him.'"

... [Al-Diyā'] said: "I heard Ḥāfiẓ Abū Mūsā, the son of the Ḥāfiẓ, say: 'I was with my father and he was mentioning the virtues of Sufyān al-Thawrī when I said to myself, surely my father is like him. He turned to me and said: "Where are we compared to them."'

"I also heard Abū Mūsā speaking about a man from Dimyāṭ[127] who said: 'I was with the Ḥāfiẓ one day and said to

127— Dimyāṭ, also known as Damietta, is a port located at the Damietta River, a distributary of the Nile, some kilometers from the Mediterranean Sea. (IN)

myself: I wish if the Ḥāfiẓ would give me some clothes that have touched his body so that I may be shrouded (*kafn*) in them. When I prepared to stand, he said: "Do not leave." When the group had left, he took off the clothes that had touched his body and gave them to me. The clothes stayed with us and anyone who was ill or his head hurt, they would leave them on him and he would be cured with the permission of Allah Most High.'

"I also heard Abu'l-Riḍā Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdur Raḥmān ibn Ibrāhīm al-Maqdisī say: 'It occurred to me that I ask the Ḥāfiẓ something regarding the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ. I went to him and found a group of people by him and became shy to ask and sat. He then mentioned that which I wanted to ask and clarified it.'

"I heard Abū ʿAlī Fāris ibn ʿUthmān ibn ʿAbdullah al-Dimashqī mention regarding a person who narrated from another who said: 'We left as a group heading for the mountain and sat by a river. One of us said: "We wish if the Ḥāfiẓ would come and he had with him a volume from which he could read us some Aḥādīth." Another said: "Also, if he came along with a sweet dish." We did not wait long when the Ḥāfiẓ came. One of us said: "Have you brought anything with you from which you could read to us?" He then took out a book from his sleeve and said: "I have brought a book and a sweet dish."'

"I heard Ḥāfiẓ Abū Mūsā say: 'My mother said to me: "One day we presented your father with the food prepared by such a person—a person who she named—and the Ḥāfiẓ did not like to eat his food. He took a morsel, raised it to his mouth and then looked at it and said this is from such a person, take it away. He did not eat anything from it."'" Al-Ḍiyā' said,

"I asked my maternal aunt, Rābīʿa bint Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Qudāma—the Ḥāfiẓ's wife—regarding this story and she narrated it to me."

Al-Ḍiyāʾ said: "I heard Abū Mūsā say: 'My father advised me at the time of his death: "Do not waste this knowledge (hadith) for which we have toiled hard." I asked: Would you not will anything? He said: "No one owes me ought and I owe no one." I said: Advise me something. He said: "My son, I advise you to fear Allah (*taqwā*) and to firmly obey Him." A group of people then came to visit him and made *salām* with him. He responded and they began speaking. He then opened his eyes and said: "What is this talk? Make *dhikr* of Allah Most High. Say *Lā ilāha illallah*." They said this and then stood up. He then began doing the *dhikr* of Allah and moving his lips with his *dhikr* and indicating with his eyes. Then entered a man, who made *salām* and said: "Do you not know me, oh my master?" He responded saying: "Why not?" I then stood to fetch him a book from the mosque. When I returned his soul had departed.[128] That was Monday 23 Rabīʿ al-Awwal, 600 AH. That night his body remained in the *masjid* and many people from among the Imāms and rulers whose number only Allah Most High could enumerate gathered the next day. We buried him on the Wednesday at Al-Qarāfa[129] opposite the grave of Shaykh Abū ʿAmr ibn Marzūq at the place that his attendant, ʿAbd al-Munʿim, mentioned that he used to visit and where he would cry till the pebbles became wet. He would say: "My

128—The man who had entered was most likely *Malak al-Mawt* (the angel of death).

129—This is one of Cairo's famous cemeteries located at the foot of Mount al-Muqattam. It is the cemetery of famous saints and *ʿulamāʾ*, including Imām al-Shāfiʿī. (IN)

heart finds rest in this place." May Allah have mercy on him, may He be pleased with him and may He join him with our Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

... Al-Ḍiyā' said: "I heard Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm ibn Maḥmūd al-Baʿlī say: 'A group of traders came to Shaykh ʿImād while I was with him. They spoke about the light (*nūr*) that they saw on the grave of Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbdul Ghanī each night or each Friday night.'"

... He (Al-Diyā') said: "I heard Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Ḥasan ibn ʿAbdullah al-Kurdī in Ḥarrān say: 'I saw the Ḥāfiẓ in a dream and said to him: Oh my master, have you not died? He replied that surely Allah Most High allowed me to continue my portion of *salah*.'"

... Al-Ḍiyā' has mentioned many of his other dreams during his life and thereafter, may Allah be pleased with him. Many people heard hadith from Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbdul Ghanī and he narrated hadith in the majority of lands that he entered like Baghdad, Damascus, Egypt, Dimyat and Isfahan. He narrated hadith in Alexanderia in the year 570 AH. Many people narrated hadith from him, including...

He was asked regarding the person who has experienced an increase in his spiritual states (*ḥāl*) and then sees a deficiency. He replied: "As to this issue, it is required of the answerer to be from among the people of spiritual states (*ḥāl*) and people of dealings (*muʿāmala*); I tell Allah of my weakness and laxity regarding this matter and its like from the matters of good.[130]

130— Note his humility ﷺ and how he tells Allah of his weakness and laxity in matters of Taṣawwuf, in spite of his lofty rank and high standing in the science of Hadith and its auxiliary disciplines. Take note of this.

I say—and *tawfīq* is with Allah—surely he who Allah grants goodness in actions (*ʿamal*), an enlightened (*nūr*) heart and praiseworthy spiritual states (*ḥāl*) in one's limbs and body, then let him praise Allah for that, and strive to completely fetter it [from escaping], praise Allah for it and to be on guard that it disappears due to slipping or stumbling. He who has lost it, then let him try greatly in recovering it and take refuge in repentance, solitude and sorrow at what he has lost, imploring his Lord and showing eagerness to Him that the state returns to him. If it returns, then it does, otherwise he will—*Inshā' Allah*—receive its reward and virtue."

He was asked once more regarding this and answered: "As to losing that which we experience in sweetness and pleasure, then this is not proof of non-acceptance [of the action]. The beginner experiences that which the expert does not, since the soul, at times, becomes weary and tired due to the stretching of time and abundance of worship. It has been narrated from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ that he would forbid from too much worship and immoderation in that, and command moderation in fear of weariness. It has also been narrated that when the people of the Yemen came to al-Madinah, they began crying and so Abū Bakr ؓ said: 'Like this were we until hearts became hard.'"

26. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab mentions in *Al-Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part 2, p. 63):

Maḥmūd ibn ʿUthmān ibn Makārim al-Naʿʿāl al-Baghdādī al-Azajī, the jurist, the orator, the ascetic, Abu'l-Thanā'—it is said he was called Abu'l-Shukr and given the title Nāṣir al-Dīn.

He was born in the year 523 AH in Baghdad. He read the Qur'ān and heard hadith from Abu'l-Fatḥ ibn al-Baṭī and narrated hadith. He memorised *Mukhtaṣar al-Khiraqī* and read [it] in the presence of Abu'l-Fatḥ ibn al-Mannī He remained in the company of Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir[131] and learned *adab* from him. He used to study *Fiqh* and *Tafsīr* and sit in his *ribāṭ* to give advice (*waʿẓ*). His *ribāṭ* was the place of gathering for the *fuqarā'*,[132] the people of religion and the Ḥanbalī jurists who would travel to Abu'l-Fatḥ ibn al-Mannī to study *Fiqh* in depth under him. They would reside there so much that the occupation with knowledge inside it was greater than what took place in the other *madrasas*.

The *ribāṭ* was decaying from the outside but inhabited by the jurists and pious. Shaykh Muwaffaq al-Dīn al-Maqdisī, Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbdul Ghanī, his brother Shaykh ʿImād, Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbdul Qādir al-Rahāwī and others from among the major travellers in the quest for knowledge lived there...[133]

Abū Shāma said: "He was a person who underwent many spiritual exercises (*riyāḍāt*) and spiritual struggles (*mujāhada*). He travelled in the lands of the Levant and elsewhere and would give preference to his companions. A vast number of people benefitted from him. He was awe inspiring, gentle, wise, a leader, friendly and smiling. He would fast for long periods

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131— He is the Imām *rabbānī* and perpetual *quṭub* Shaykh 'Abdul-Qādir al-Jīlānī, the great Imām of the Sufis and he to whom all the Sufi *ṭuruq* return back to.

132— We often find the Sufis referring themselves in Arabic as *faqīr* (pl. *fuqarā'*), which literally means 'the poor', but in the context of Sufism means the Sufis. (IN)

133— Note that these notable individuals and pinnacles of knowledge were reared in the bosom of Taṣawwuf in the *ribāṭ* of the Sufi masters.

and complete the Qur'ān each day and night. He would only eat [from the money earned from] the yarn that he himself spun.

He died on Wednesday 10 Safar, 609 AH, at the age of over eighty years. He was buried that night at his *ribāṭ*—may Allah Most High have mercy on him. It was also said that he died on the night of the ninth.

27. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab mentions in *Al-Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part 2, p. 77):

Muḥammad ibn Maʿālī ibn Ghunayma al-Baghdādī al-Maʿmūnī al-Muqriʾ, the jurist, the ascetic, Abū Bakr ibn al-Ḥallāwī. He was given the title *ʿimād al-dīn*... he heard from Abu'l-Fatḥ ibn al-Karrūkhī, Abu'l-Faḍl ibn Nāṣir, Abū Bakr ibn al-Zāghūnī, Saʿīd ibn al-Bannā and others. He studied *Fiqh* under Abu'l-Fatḥ ibn al-Mannī and he was one of the jurists from among his students. He was an expert in the *madhhab* and had reached the pinnacle of its knowledge, while also being abstinent and God-fearing, and remaining in seclusion away from people.

Ibn al-Qatīʿī said: "He was a pious man with a standing in abstinence. He would remain in his *masjid* at Al-Maʾmūniyya turning to that which would benefit him from the affairs of his hereafter. He would remain in seclusion and solitude." Ibn al-Qādisī has also praised him a great deal and said: "He was an expert on the *madhhab* and in issuing *fatāwā*. He would always remain in his corner in the *masjid* and would hardly mix with anyone save those people of religion who would visit him. He never came to the door of anyone from the people of the world and did not accept a gift from

anyone. He was one of the *abdāl* through whom Allah protects the world and those on it."

28. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Rajab mentions in *Al-Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part 2, p. 93):

Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAbdul Wāḥid ibn ʿAlī ibn Surūr al-Maqdisī al-Dimashqī, the jurist, the ascetic, the abstinent [in matters of religion], the worshipper, the shaykh, ʿImād al-Dīn, Abū Isḥāq, Abū Ismāʿīl, the brother of Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbd al-Ghanī who was mentioned earlier...

Shaykh Muwaffaq al-Dīn said regarding ʿImād when he was asked about him: "He was from among the best of our companions, the greatest in benefitting, the most abstinent [in matters of religion], and the most patient in learning the Qurʾān and *Fiqh*. He was a caller to the Sunnah and teaching knowledge and the faith. He would remain close to the poor and weak, feeding them and spending on them himself. Out of all people, he was the humblest, the one to consider his self the lowliest and the one to fear Allah Most High the most. I do not know whether I saw anyone who feared [Allah] more than he. He would supplicate and beseech Allah Most High a lot. He would lengthen the *rukūʿ* and *sujūd* in Salah, and intend to follow the Salah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. He would not obey anyone who rebuked him for that. Many miracles of his have been narrated."

...Al-Ḍiyāʾ said: "Perhaps it was that none would sit by him except gain a benefit in knowledge and asceticism, or knowledge regarding his manners (*akhlāq*) or litanies (*awrād*), etc. He would rebuke his self (*nafs*) a lot and consider it low,

saying: 'What does it make me do? What am I?' He was of great humility."

... Al-Ḍiyā' said: "His kindness to his companions and acquaintances was such that each of them would feel that there is none like him..."

Al-Ḍiyā' said: "He advised me when I was travelling: 'Read the Qur'ān a lot and do not leave it, for it shall make easy for you that which you seek according to the measure that you read.' I saw this and experienced this a lot. When I used to read the Qur'ān a lot, then listening to hadith and writing it became very easy, and when I did not, then it would not be easy."

... Al-Ḍiyā' said: "He would fast one day and not on the other." He also said: "He would make plenty of *duʿā'* during the day and night." He said: "When he used to supplicate, it was as if the heart is witnessing the acceptance of the supplication due to the great fervor and sincerity. When he began supplicating then he would hardly end it. If his family and neighbors gathered then he would supplicate in their presence and they would feel pleased by it. Such [words of] supplications would come to him which I have never heard from anyone else. At times, some of those present would cry when he supplicated. He would mention his searching of times and places when supplications are accepted. He would make a habit of supplicating on Wednesdays between the Ẓuhr and ʿAsr prayers by the graves of the martyrs at the Bāb al-Ṣaghīr. He would say: 'I have not seen the like of this *duʿā'* (or more hasty in being answered than it). Oh Allah, Oh Allah. You are Allah. Why not, I swear by Allah, you are Allah. There is no deity save you. Allah, Allah, Allah. I swear by Allah, there is no deity save Allah."

... He (Ḥāfiẓ Al-Diyā') has also mentioned a number of his miracles and words regarding thoughts (*khāṭir*) and things from the unseen. He mentioned some of them: "I was walking behind Shaykh ʿImād in the large market when we heard the noise of a *ṭanbūr*.[134] When we reached its player, the shaykh said: '*Lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bi'llah al-ʿaliyy al-ʿaẓīm*,' and shook his sleeve. I then saw the man fall and his *ṭanbūr* broke. The man was asked: 'What happened to you?' He replied: 'I don't know.'"

Al-Ḍiyā' said: "I heard Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdul Muḥsin ibn ʿAbdul Karīm say: 'I was behind Shaykh ʿImād and it occurred to me that people do not know about each other except for what is obvious and no one knows the secrets of people. All of a sudden the shaykh turned to me and said that one of the pious said and I think it was Fuḍayl [who said it]: "Do not do anything evil or wicked, for the hearts of the pious will detest you."'

"I also heard ʿAlī ibn Abū Bakr ibn Idrīs al-Ṭaḥḥān say: 'I had an ill son and so I said to myself I shall supplicate with the *duʿā'* of Muqātil ibn Sulaymān a hundred times and so I did. Then I came to him. He turned to me and those present and said: "A supplication without action (*ʿamal*) is of no benefit," or something to that effect.'"

Al-Ḍiyā' said: "The shaykh's wife narrated: 'Before his death, he would greatly say: "The matter has drawn near, there is only a little left."'"

Ḥāfiẓ Al-Ḍiyā' has mentioned in the book *Al-Ḥikāyāt al-Muqtabasa min Karāmāt Mashāyikh al-Arḍ al-Muqaddasa* an entire chapter regarding his miracles, which I have read in his own writing. He writes: "I heard the shaykh, he whose

134— The *ṭanbūr* is a long-necked lute with origins in Persia. (IN)

supplications would go answered, Abū Aḥmad Naṣr ibn Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-Mirdāwī say: 'Shaykh ʿImād came to us and I wanted to ask him regarding some things but was shy. He began and mentioned all that I wished to ask him.'"

He (Al-Ḍiyā') said: "Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdur Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdul Jabbār narrated to me: 'I used to come to him a lot and I wanted to say something, but he would be beat me to it and mention it. When he used to see that I had begun talking then he would remain silent. However, he did not show that he wanted that.'"

Al-Ḍiyā' said: "I used to find hardness in my heart and I wanted to complain to him regarding that. He began a conversation with me one night and mentioned the hardness of the heart. He said: 'How can a heart be soft, when the actions are not with sincere intention?' He said many things which I sensed in myself and felt elated by his speech..."

(Al-Ḍiyā' said) "I heard Imām Abu'l-Fidā' Ismāʿīl ibn ʿUmar ibn Abū Bakr say: 'One day I took from a man some volumes of books and ijāzāt that belonged to me that were with him. Among all that I took was an *ijāza* that did not belong to me. I then came to the shaykh and he looked at the volumes. He then raised the *ijāza* that had become mixed [in with the others] and said: "Who gave you this?" He then separated it [out from the rest]. I realized this was a miracle from him. He then mentioned the amazing way in which the Qur'ān and knowledge would be made easy for he who studied under him.'"

"I also heard Ẓarīfa bint Ibrāhīm say: 'Aḥmad ibn Sālim said to me: "I know in the mountain five of the pious," or he said *awliyā'*. Among them he mentioned Imām Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAbdul Wāḥid.'"

This Aḥmad ibn Sālim Mardāwī was a scholar who acted on knowledge; he was a man of many miracles which have been mentioned in this book.

He (Al-Diyā') said: "'Abdur Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdul Jabbār narrated to me that his wife, ʿĀ'isha bint Khalaf ibn Rājiḥ, narrated to him that she saw in a dream someone saying: 'Tell ʿImād to pray for you, for he is from among the seven on whose account the earth remains.'"

Abu'l-Muẓaffar, Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, has also mentioned him in his book of history and praised him a great deal. He said: "He did not make a movement, take a step or say anything, except for [the pleasure of] Allah Most High. He would worship with sincerity..."

... He [Al-Ḍiyā'] said: "I saw He Most High in a dream and Shaykh ʿImād was on his right. His face was like the full moon and on him were clothes the like I have not seen." He said: "I heard the jurist, the Imām, ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd ibn Muḥammad ibn Māḍī al-Maqdisī say: 'I smelt an excellent fragrance twice from the grave of Shaykh ʿImād—may Allah Most High have mercy on him.'" He narrated a lot and many of the *ḥuffāẓ* [of hadith] and Imāms such as Al-Ḍiyā' and al-Mundhirī narrated from him. Ibn Khalīl and ibn al-Bukhārī also narrated from him...

SHAYKH AL-ISLAM

AḤMAD IBN ʿABDUL ḤALĪM IBN TAYMIYYAH

AL-ḤARRĀNĪ AL-DIMASHQĪ AL-ḤANBALĪ

BEFORE WE BEGIN CITING VARIOUS QUOTATIONS FROM the writings of Ibn Taymiyyah from his numerous books, we shall firstly present a number of extracts from a lengthy letter written by one of his great students, Shaykh ʿImād al-Dīn ibn Shaykh al-Ḥizāmiyyīn. We shall then cite a few sections from four poems composed to mourn the death of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah by his students and admirers from which it becomes clear that he was, according to them, a shaykh of Ṭarīqa and Imām of Taṣawwuf on the level of being a *quṭub* in this field, in addition to his being an Imām in other religious fields and an expert in various sciences and disciplines. We shall follow this with portions

from the writings of some contemporary researchers who have explicitly mentioned Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah's firm connection to Taṣawwuf and the Sufi shaykhs, may Allah have mercy on them. We shall thereafter, *inshā'* Allah, quote his writings from his various books.

The Salafi Imām Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī al-Ḥanbalī writes in his book *Al-ʿUqūd al-Durrīyya min Manāqib Shaykh al-Islam Aḥmad ibn Taymiyyah* (published by *Maṭbaʿah al-Madanī*, Cairo), p.192:

His (Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah's) total absence from Damascus was seven years and seven weeks.[135] During the shaykh's absence from Damascus, many of his great companions and masters passed away. Among them was the shaykh, the Imām, the exemplar, the ascetic, the knower of Allah, ʿImād al-Dīn Abu'l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAbdur Raḥmān al-Wāsiṭī, who was popularly known as Ibn Shaykh al-Ḥizāmiyyīn.[136] He died on Saturday, 26 Rabīʿ al-Ākhir, 711 AH. He was a pious man, abstinent, of great standing, someone who had severed himself [from the *dunyā*] for Allah, and one who was great in worship and Sulūk. He had written a letter which he sent to a group of the shaykh's companions in which he directed them to firmly remain with the shaykh and encouraged them to follow his way. He praised the shaykh greatly in that. This is a copy of the letter that he wrote:

135— He reached Damascus after this absence on 1 Dhu al-Qaʿda 712 AH.

136— He has already been mentioned in the various sections from the writings of Imām Hāfiẓ Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī.

An Excellent Letter from Shaykh ʿImād Al-Dīn Praising Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah and Advising Regarding Him

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful. All praise is for Allah and glory is for Allah along with His praise. Hallowed is He in His exaltedness and splendor. He is most high in all His perfect qualities (*ṣifāt*). He is grand in the majesty of His uniqueness and beauty. He is noble in His excellent qualities and the beauty of His favors. He is beyond comparison (*tamthīl*) with any of His creation nor can He be comprehended, rather He encompasses all that He has created. Minds cannot comprehend Him, bodies cannot carry Him, and nor can eyes and intellects understand the nature of His being...

Thereafter, this is a letter written by the feeble slave—he who is hopeful of the mercy of his Lord, His forgiveness, kindness and favor, Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Wāsiṭī (may Allah treat him as he deserves for indeed He alone is worthy to be feared and obeyed (*ahl al-taqwā*) and He alone forgives sins when He so wishes (*ahl al-maghfira*))—to his brothers for the sake of Allah, the honorable *ʿulamā'*, the God-fearing Imāms, and the people of beneficial knowledge, humble hearts and brilliant light, those whom Allah has clothed in the garb of the followers. I am hopeful of His kindness that He asserts for them the true essence of benefitting: [They are namely] the great master, the erudite scholar, the pride of the hadith scholars, the lamp of the worshippers, he who is turned to the Lord of the Worlds, Taqī al-Dīn Abū Hafṣ ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdullah ibn ʿAbd al-Aḥad ibn Shaqīr; the great shaykh, the erudite scholar, the *sālik*, the one with knowledge and actions, he who

is dressed in the most beautiful attire in terms of praiseworthy qualities, Shaykh Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdul Aḥad al-Āmidī... and others from those who seek shelter in the presence of their shaykh, our shaykh, the master, the magnanimous Imām and teacher of good, the reviver of the Sunnah, the destroyer of innovation (*bidʿa*), the aider of hadith, the *mufti* of various denominations, he who has transcended realities and connected them to the principles of Sacred Law for the seeker who is tasting spiritual bliss (*dhawq*), he who gathered between the exoteric [outward] and the esoteric [inward] for he judges according to the truth clearly whilst his heart is dwelling with the Most High, he is from the example of the Rightly Guided Caliphs and guided Imāms whose path became hidden from hearts and the Ummah forgot their example and way, and so the shaykh reminded them of that, he who treads in their obliterated ways, he is a reviver of their dead ways, a possessor of the reins of their principles, the shaykh, the Imām, Taqī al-Dīn Abu'l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdul Ḥalīm ibn ʿAbdus Salām ibn Taymiyyah, may Allah bring upon us his blessings (*baraka*) and raise his rank to the highest station, may He also make perpetual the divine *tawfīq* and the correctness of those with whose mention [this letter] began, and increase for them their lot and much more.

Peace be upon you, oh brothers, and the mercy of Allah and His blessings. May Allah make us and you from among those whose hearts remain firm on the difficulties of the truth. I am hopeful of reward from Allah for that which one expends from one's self in establishing His faith, the grief that one experiences on account of that and the treading in the path of

the early predecessors from among the Migrants (Muhājirīn), Helpers (Anṣār) and those who were unperturbed by the blame of the criticizer; those who abandoned them did not harm them nor did those who opposed them in spite of their being few in number at the beginning.

In spite of that, each of them strove hard and was firm in the faith of Allah. We have hope of the favor of Allah Most High that he grants us *tawfīq* to follow their actions, grants our hearts a portion of their spiritual states (*ḥāl*), arranges us as beads along their thread and under their banner with their leader and Imām, the master of the prophets, the Imām of the pious, Muḥammad, may Allah bless him, his family and companions, all of them…

It is known that people are different in their stations of love and fear; they are in a station that is loftier than the other and have a share that is greater than the other. Let the aim of each of us in relation to the stations of love and fear be the loftiest and let us not suffice except with an abundant portion of it and its apex. Low ambitions suffice with a little portion, while lofty ambitions rise with breaths close to the Beloved; that which is below it in qualities will not preoccupy us from it. The intelligent will not suffice with something that is superseded by a superior [spiritual] state (*ḥāl*). Let aspirations be divided into acquiring exoteric [outward] levels and esoteric [inward] stations (*maqāmāt*). It is not fair to fatigue one's self in the exoteric while being preoccupied in anything apart from lofty goals of brilliant lights [i.e. the esoteric].

Let there be for all of us during the night and day an hour in which we sit in solitude with our Lord Whose name is

magnanimous and Whose hallowedness is most high, and gather our thoughts in front Him in that hour, cast away from our hearts the preoccupations of the world and remain aloof from all that is apart from Allah for an hour of the day. By this, man will recognize his condition with his Lord. Hence, he who is of a standing with his Lord, his determination shall come into motion during that hour, his inner self will become glad on account of the love and exaltedness, and his breathing and secrets will hasten to that which is lofty. These hours are examples of the situation of the slave in his grave when he will become devoid of his wealth and its love. He who does not vacate his heart for an hour of the day—which would drive him away from worldly thoughts and people of sin—then know that he is not of any lofty connection, nor does he have a portion of love or being the beloved. Let him cry over his self; he should in respect to it only be pleased with being close to his Lord and being intimate with Him.

If those hours are acquired for Allah's sake, then it is possible to realize the five prayers in their [proper] mode of having presence of mind (*ḥuḍūr*), humbleness (*khushūʿ*) and awe for the Lord Most High in prostration (*sujūd*) and bowing (*rukūʿ*).

It is not proper for us that we become miserly with ourselves in setting aside one hour for Allah Most High during the twenty-four hours of the day and night in which we may worship Him as He ought to be and then strive in realizing the obligatory acts (*farḍ*) in a way that is in due accordance for Him. This is the path of us all that we have to, *inshāʾ* Allah *Taʿālā*, pass. Hence, the jurist who has not traversed this path has acquired, through his knowledge, the exoteric [outward] portion

and missed the esoteric [inward] portion due to his heart being characterized with hardness and due to his being far, when worshipping and reciting [the Qur'ān], from having a soft heart and flesh. It is as Allah Most High says: *"Shivered from which are the flesh of those who fear their Lord, so that their flesh and their hearts soften to the remembrance of Allah."* (39:23)

With this (traversing the path), the jurist rises above the jurists of our era and by it he becomes distinguished from them. The one who has traversed [the spiritual path] from among the jurists has enlightened sight, correct taste of spiritual bliss (*dhawq*), true insight (*firāsa*) and complete knowledge of Allah (*maʿrifa*); he is a beholder over others in [understanding] correct actions and those that are wrong. He who has not traversed [the path], he will not have these specialities. He will see some things and others will remain hidden from him. Therefore, it is upon us all to traverse close into the presence of He Who is worshipped, to meet Him with firm conviction so that we may worship Him as though we are seeing him as has come in the hadith...

You have come, my brothers, under the banner of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, *inshāʿ* Allah *Taʿālā*, with your shaykh and Imām, our shaykh and Imām with whose mention we began—may Allah be pleased with him. You are distinct from all the people of the world—its jurists, *fuqarāʾ* and Sufis—with the correct religion. You have recognized what innovations people have introduced from among the jurists, *fuqarāʾ*, Sufis and lay masses...

Then, my brothers, know the favor that Allah has favored you with in your standing for that. Know your way to that and thank Allah Most High for that; He is the one who raised

for you and us in this era the like of our master, the shaykh by whom Allah opened the locks of hearts and by whom he removed from sights the blindness of doubts and bewilderment of deviancy, wherein which the intellect would lose its way between these sects and not find the way to the reality of the faith of the Prophet ﷺ.

Among that which is strange is that each of them claims that he is on the faith of the Prophet until Allah revealed for us and you, by means of this man, the reality of His faith which he revealed from the heavens and preferred for His slaves.

Know that in the far-flung areas of the world are communities that live their lives among these sects, believing that these innovations are the true Islam; they do not know Islam except like this.

Thank Allah Who rose for you at the beginning of seven hundred years after the Hijra a man who clarified for you the rites of your faith, by whom Allah guided you and us to the way of His Sacred Law (Sharīʿa), and with this light of Muḥammad he clarified for you the deviances of people and their errors. You began to recognize that which is crooked from that which is straight, and right from wrong. I hope you will be the aided group, those who will not be harmed by those who abandon them and oppose them—they will be in the Levant *inshāʾ Allah Taʿālā*.

Chapter:

When you have known this, then recognize the right and worth of this man who is among us; his right and worth will not be recognized save by he who has recognized the religion

of the Prophet ﷺ, and its right and worth. He in whose heart the faith of the Prophet ﷺ has taken the place that it deserves will recognize the correctness of that with which this man has stood up for amidst the slaves of Allah—he sets right their distortions, corrects their corruption and rectifies their unsettled affairs as much as possible in these dark times in which the faith is distorted, the Sunnahs are unknown, innovations are common, good is wrong and wrong is good. The one holding on to his religion is like the one holding hot embers. Surely, the reward of he who stands in expressing this light in this darkness cannot be described; its danger cannot be recognized. This is when you recognize him from the exoteric (outward) Sharīʿa way. There are people here who have recognized him in a different way, in an esoteric (inward) manner. They are those whom he guided to recognize the names of Allah Most High and His qualities and the greatness of His being (*dhāt*), to attach their hearts to the beams of His *maʿrifa*, to be fortunate to possess the specialities of His *maʿrifa* and lofty spiritual bliss (*dhawq*), to pass from the exoteric to the esoteric and from witnessing to absence and from absence to witnessing, and to pass from the world of creation (*ʿālam al-khalq*) to the world of command (*ʿālam al-ʾamr*) and other things the explanation of which is not possible in a book. Your shaykh—may Allah Most High aid you—is a knower of all of that. He knows the injunctions of Allah and the Sacred Law, he is a knower of injunctions pertaining to His names and personal qualities. The likes of this knower (*ʿārif*) is that at times he could see with his vision the descent of the Command between the levels of the heavens and the earth. It is as He Most High has said: *"Allah*

is the One who has created seven skies, and their like from earth. The Command descends among them, so that you may know that Allah is powerful over everything, and that Allah has encompassed everything in knowledge." (65:12) People sense that which operates in the abode of viewing (*ʿālam al-shahāda*), while the sight of these people is focused on the unseen waiting what destiny shall bring. They feel this at times when it descends.

Do not consider insignificant the situation of these people due to their friendliness with people and their preoccupation of their time with them. They are as has been narrated from Junayd ﷺ that it was said to him: "How much do you call unto Allah Most High while being with people?" He replied: "I call unto the people while in front of Allah."

Allah ensures he (Ibn Taymiyyah) is respected and his orders are carried out. He protects his honor in his presence and absence, He loves he who loves him and keeps aloof those who dislike him and demean him. He rejects slander regarding him and is in support of him in the truth.

Know, may Allah have mercy on you, that there is here that person who travelled to the provinces and recognized the people and their habits, and came to know of the majority of their conditions. I swear by Allah, I swear by Allah and I swear by Allah, he has not seen under the skies the like of your shaykh in knowledge, actions, spiritual condition (*ḥāl*), manners, following, nobility, gentleness in matters regarding himself, and firmness in standing for the right of Allah when that which He has made sacred and inviolable is broken. He is the most truthful of people in making an agreement, most correct in knowledge and intention, the most energetic and

zealous in aiding and establishing the truth, the most generous and perfect in following the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ.

We have not seen in this age of ours anyone who presents with clarity the Muḥammadan Prophethood (*al-nubuwwa al-Muḥammadiyya*) and the Sunnah from his sayings and actions except this man. He does so in a way that the balanced heart testifies that this is following in the true sense.

After all of this, saying the truth is incumbent. We do not claim he is infallibile from committing mistakes, nor do we claim he is absolutely perfect in relation to all specialities that are sought after for there are, at times, sought after and desired specialities in some who are deficient; these are such specialities that perfection would not be complete without them. The just knower is not ignorant of this value. If speaking the truth was not obligatory and being sectarian (*taʿaṣṣub*) in relation to people is swerving from the truth (*hawâ*), then I would have abstained from mentioning this. However, speaking the truth is incumbent regardless if it displeases or pleases. Help is sought from Allah.

When you have recognized this, may Allah Most High help you, then look after his heart, for indeed the likes of him at times are called on in a great fashion in the heavenly sphere. Carry out actions to make him happy in all possible ways and attract his affection and fondness as much as is possible for the like of him are possessors of great knowledge and those in possession of great knowledge seek in this era the likes of him. So, if you were to gain his affection then I would hope for you, on account of that, some specialities that I shall not disclose or mention. At times, the intelligent from among you will

recognize that and at times my soul shall allow me to mention so that my advice is not hidden from you.

That speciality is that you acquire a piece of his special Muḥammadan connection with Allah Most High, for that will only come by means of the shaykh's love for the *murīd*, and the *murīd* will attract the shaykh's love by being gentle with him, looking after his heart and feelings, and attracting his affection and fondness. By that, I hope for you a portion of that which is between him and Allah Most high not to mention what you earn from him in terms of his exoteric knowledge, benefits and managing of affairs, *inshā'* Allah.

I hope that when you are successful in the relationship between you and your Lord Most High by means of correct dealings [with Him] by safeguarding that hour, the five prayers and Tahajjud, then He will bestow you with knowing the reality of this man and true information about him, *inshā'* Allah.

I have only mentioned the safeguarding of one hour even though the five prayers are enough when the slave stands to pray for Allah Most High's sake; that is because the five prayers come suddenly on the slave while his heart is gripped by external distractions and so he does not recognize the lot of his heart with his Lord within that time. When the slave has an hour from the night and day in which he recognizes the lot of his heart with his lord then when the prayers come he will recognize during that time his condition—his advancement and retraction—in comparison to his condition with his Lord in that one hour. It is from Allah that aid is sought.

The Salafi Imām Ḥāfiẓ Ibn ʿAbdul Hādī al-Ḥanbalī has also mentioned in *Al-ʿUqūd al-Durriyya* an extremely long poem composed by Shaykh ʿAbdullah ibn Khiḍr ibn ʿAbdur Raḥmān al-Rūmī[137] (by origin) al-Dimashqī al-Ḥarīrī, who was known as al-Mutayyam (the Enthralled in Love), to mourn the death of Shaykh Taqī al-Dīn ibn Taymiyyah. The composer is one of the shaykh's companions. We shall cite from it some poems pertaining to this issue:

I have lost an Imām who was unique in his era,
the entire creation is in grief in this era,

I have lost an Imām who constantly placed his trust in Allah
and did not incline to anything contrary to the Sunnah,

I have lost an Imām who acted on knowledge
and was in reality one who uprooted every innovation (bidʿa),

He brought the Book of Allah and the Sunnah which is lofty
and which definitely rose higher than every other religion,

He brought the hadiths of the Prophet and explained them,
and from those he narrated he did so with the correct text,

He brought the knowledge of the entire world
with asceticism, support, piety and strength,

He brought the principles of the faith and fiqh that required
explanation and explained them with detail leaving no doubt,

He brought before us the conditions of the Prophet in their true sense
and his biography which rises over every other life story,

137— Al-Rūmī is a *nisba* designating people originating in the Byzantine Roman Empire or lands that formerly belonged to it, especially Anatolia in present day Turkey. (IN)

He brought to us the conditions of all of the Companions
and the Followers (Tabiʿīn) the straight religion,

He brought before us the qualities of all of the Imāms
and compiled books describing them,

He brought to us the description of the pious and their conditions
and that on which they were in terms of beautiful ʿaqīda,

◈ ◈ ◈

Who was a quṭub of the universe (al-kawn) in his time save he?
Who else had reached being an abdāl (al-badaliyya)?

He was brave, high-minded and excellent in his qualities.
He would aim high in lofty levels,

◈ ◈ ◈

In love of his Lord he would command the good
and forbid the wrong firmly,

He was God-fearing, pure and upright since his youth,
and of noble disposition and praiseworthy qualities,

Is he not the one whose mention has spread in the universe
and who spread wide among the creation great fatwas?

Who was the crown of the knowers of Allah (ʿārifs) in our era
and the shaykh of guidance? Tell me without any zeal (ḥamīyya),

He was the sage (ḥibr) and quṭub whose mention spread far
and whose repute as a man of piety became well known like
fragrance when it disperses,

When we mention his condition and qualities,
it is as if we have entered into enjoyment and a garden,

◈ ◈ ◈

You bid farewell to us in a way that you will not be returning;
you have gone from us and the abode is not distant,

I drank wine from the glass of the knowers of Allah (ʿārifs);
its essence was from the innermost part of the spring of ḥaqīqa,

I found by the glass kindness from you
and generosity over those who followed the Sunnah of Aḥmad,

Glory be to He Who granted you from the excesses of His generosity.
Verily you acquired proximity that cannot be gained by means of a strategy,

Verily you lived beloved and died revered.
Let the Merciful bestow on you the purest of greetings from me,

The radiance of His friendship continued to raise you and you remained forever with respect, proximity [to Him] and in loftiness.

Shaykh al-Mutayyam al-Rūmī al-Ḥarīrī also has another poem which was written to lament the death of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah ﷺ and which Ḥāfiẓ Ibn ʿAbdul Hadi has mentioned in *Al-ʿUqūd al-Durriyya*. We shall also quote a few couplets from there:

He perpetually remained in need at the door of his Master
and constantly afflicted with trials,

Forever he followed the ways of the Prophet according
to the correct methodology by following proper signs,

He guided to his Sunnah, issued fatwas according to his Sharīʿa
and safeguarded his boundaries at all hours,

He was the quṭub of the era, the crown of all of the people and the
embodiment of meanings who carried out all types of worship,

He was the sage of knowledge and unique in his knowledge.
He annihilated with the saber of guidance the people of deviance,

He drew from Mustafa knowledge and maʿrifa;
and came to him from the Prophet help and gifts,

A seeker of aid would not come to him, save that he would grant him,
either with abundant generosity or [in the least] with what has
been sought,

What shall I say? Is it that my speech in regards to him is confined
to describing his manners? The words I utter have become fatigued,

In terms of his knowledge, we do not know anyone equal to him
except for our Imāms, the people of kindness,

In terms of his asceticism, we have not heard of anyone who
compares to him, save for the men of the past, the people of miracles,

In terms of his generosity, we have not found anyone akin to him,
save for the al-Barāmiks[138] *who were from the people of good fortune,*

138— The al-Baramiks (also pronounced Barmakid or Barameka) was a well-known family of secretaries and viziers during the time of the early Abbasids. They originated in Balkh where they were Buddhists prior to accepting Islam. They, subsequently, came to great political power under the Abbasids and were known for their splendor and hospitality which became proverbial. They are also mentioned in some stories of the *Arabian Nights*. (IN)

He would be generous and he was poor himself.
How astonishing, he is the one we have never heard in stories,

The sun of The Noble One shines in his good character
and in the clarity of his face is the light of guidance,

An ocean of inner knowledge of Allah (maʿrifa), at the beginning
of which the people of great qualities [of knowledge, piety
and generosity] and those who have reached the utmost point
would wander lost,

He is a quṭub of realities [pertaining to Allah]. The people of
Taṣawwuf and the men of spiritual exercises (riyāḍāt)
would be left perplexed in explaining his perfect qualities,

He was the wonder of the era and unrivalled in his excellent qualities,
the ʿallāma of the age in the past and in the future,

My heart grieved for he gathered us on the sciences
that are commended and subtle allusions,

I separated from he who quenched my thirst just by seeing him
because the secrets of worship would indeed manifest,

He narrated stories regarding the dwellers of Kāẓima
which would enrapture people due to the excellent stories,

He would exert himself in mentioning their excellent qualities,
as a result of which the heart would dance in eagerness like those
who are noble,

He has reached Allah and the gardens of paradise are his abode.
Let there be upon him from his Cherisher the purest of greetings,

Then salutation on the best of the people,
he whom Allah chose from the creation,

He whom He chose to be in His presence on the night of Isra
until the Lord of the Heavens manifested His self to him,

For he is the intercessor whose intercession is hoped
at the times of difficulties on the day of reckoning.

Among the poems which mourn Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, Ḥāfiẓ Ibn ʿAbdul Hādī al-Ḥanbalī has also included in *Al-ʿUqūd al-Durriyya* a lengthy ode by a military man from the Egyptian lands called Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿIzz al-Dīn Anudmun al-Mughīthī, an erudite man who had memorized diverse knowledge. He was religious and firm in his religion. He presented this poem to Imām Abū Ḥayyān. Here are some stanzas from it:

Converse without any fear and speak regarding his asceticism what
you wish. There shall be no refutation or sins incurred [in doing so],

He abandoned food, clothes and the world.
In his dedication in abandoning them he was firm,

He ate and slept little, and reverence for the men of the world
could not be seen in his heart,

◈ ◈ ◈

He was overcome with the awe of his Lord. His speech was,
hence, one of revering and honoring [Him],

◈ ◈ ◈

He would avoid people on account of his preoccupation with his
Beloved. Hence, his showing of affection to those close to him was
[simply] by way of making salām,

He had a standing in reaching his Lord.
Such was his standing that pens would write about it,

And he possessed many favors from the hidden treasures of his Lord.
[He also possessed] being sorrowful, humble and good speech,

[He also possessed, from his Lord, a standing in] Taṣawwuf, a sense of abstinence, chastity, qira'ah, [a high level of] worship and [habitual] fasting,

[He also possessed from his Lord] divine focus, protection, guarding, safeguarding, faithfulness and standing,

He performed miracles which were very clear and much in number, and over the passing of time continued [to take place],

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn ʿAbdul Hādī has also produced, in *Al-ʿUqūd al-Durriyya*, an elegy also in remembrance of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah. He has, however, not mentioned the name of its composer.[139] Here are some stanzas:

If only I had, on the day of departure, visited him
so that I could renew my pledges that I had made,

He was our shaykh, our leader and our Imām.
To Allah is attributed his being pure, righteous and God-fearing,

139— It seems that the poem has been composed by one of the shaykh's *muridīn*, and Allah knows best.

If you say he went around greatly for knowledge then this is the truth.
Listen to this word regarding him and verify it,

He would issue fatwas by gathering the four madhhabs.
However, in excellence he was the last of those who remained behind,

He was, in qirā'a unique in his age.
In usul [of fiqh] he benefitted us and also in diction,

He was the shaykh of Ṭarīqa and Ḥaqīqa, and a knower of Allah (ʿārif). He was an inheritor of Imāma and the religious sciences, so verify it,

[He was] a giver of alms (ṣadaqa), kind and generous;
I swear by Allah, no giver of alms can replace him,

◈ ◈ ◈

Oh grave of his, that ascetic, pious, pure and God-fearing one
that you have taken possession of will please you greatly,

You have become a garden of paradise by his coming.
For you, hence, is pride and prosperity with the master.

◈ ◈ ◈

Having sufficed with various odes that some of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah's companions and followers composed to lament his death, we shall now cite from the writings of some contemporary researchers; beginning with what the great Islamic thinker, the *ʿallāma*, the historian, the great researcher Sayyid Abu'l-Ḥasan ʿAlī al-Ḥasanī al-Nadwī (may Allah protect him with goodness and allow people to benefit from him)

has mentioned in part two of his amazing book *Rijāl al-Fikr wa al-Daʿwa fi'l-Islam*[140]—this part is full of the life of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah:

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah as a Knower of Allah (ʿĀrif bi'llah) and Researcher (Muḥaqqiq)—New Revelations Regarding the Character of Ibn Taymiyyah

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah is generally known as a scholar of theology (*mutakallim*), a dialectic jurist (*faqīh jadalī*) and a great scholar of hadith. Students of his academic writings and books on dialectics do not feel he is more than an intelligent scholar of great knowledge, strong proof and wealth of information. Those who know him by way of the biographies that general historians have written or judge him according to his later students and those who affiliate themselves to him[141] do not see in him anything more than a dry hadith scholar and scholar who is thoroughly familiar with the exoteric sciences. What Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya has mentioned in *Madārij al-Sālikīn* in relation to his spiritual states (*aḥwāl*) and sayings at various opportunities and, likewise, what ʿAllāma al-Dhahabī and others like him have mentioned in his biography in relation to his manners and tastes, habits and character, and his spiritual exercises (*ashghāl*) and actions clearly show that

140— Shaykh Abu'l-Ḥasan's book is available in English under the title *Saviors of Islamic Spirit*. This particular section in relation to Shaykh Ibn Taymiyyah is not found in the English translation. (IN)

141— This is aside from his excellent student Hāfiẓ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzī who has discussed his teacher's esoteric spiritual condition in his book *Madārij al-Sālikīn* which is the commentary of Shaykh al-Islam al-Hirawī's *Manāzil al-Sā'irīn*; in this book it is clear that Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah and his student Ibn al-Qayyim occupied a lofty position in the knowledge of Allah (*maʿrifa*), spirituality and esoteric taste (*dhawq*).

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah fully deserves to be counted among the knowers of Allah (*ʿārifs*) and people of Allah (*rijāl* Allah) in this Ummah. All may be delighted to know that he took that place and enjoyed all those goals that, generally, cannot be easily acquired save by way of difficult spiritual exercises (*riyāḍāt*), lengthy sacrifice, the spiritual conditioning (*tarbiya*) of the Imāms of this knowledge and constant *dhikr* and meditation (*murāqaba*)—and that is something that the later Sufis called *nisbah* with Allah.[142] *"That is a favor of Allah. He gives it to whom He wills"* (57:29).

Numerous Means Yet Singular Goal

It is clear to the people of insight that spiritual taste (*dhawq*), knowledge of Allah (*maʿrifa*), actual faith (*īmān ḥaqīqī*), firm conviction (*yaqīn*), sincerity, steadfastness, the purification of the inner self (*tazkiya al-bāṭin*), correction of manners, the complete following of the Sunnah and dedication in following the Sharīʿa are (all) real goals that are sought after, for which numerous means and paths are adopted. Those who research this have not limited their acquisition to a single path. The powerful and effective way to acquire these goals at the dawn of the history of the Islamic *daʿwa* was the company (*suḥba*) of the Prophet ﷺ; the effect and strength of which was not unknown to anyone.

When the Ummah of Islam was deprived of this bounty, the successors of Prophethood and the physicians of this Ummah in their eras practiced a way that could substitute that. Eventually, they focused the majority of their attention, due to various reasons, on *suḥba* and plenty of *dhikr* according to a

142— In other words a spiritual connection with religiosity.

codified and pristine methodology that is known as the system of Taṣawwuf and Sulūk. One cannot deny that the acquisition of these goals and purposes is not dependant on these means. For īmān and seeking reward from Allah (*iḥtisāb*), taking stock of the inner self (*nafs*), following the Sunnah, preoccupation with the books of hadith and the characteristics of the Prophet (*shamā'il*) in terms of studying, teaching, serving and propagating them with love and reverence, plentiful *Ṣalāh wa Salām* on the Prophet ﷺ, serving the creation, jihād, commanding the good and forbidding the wrong, calling to Allah (*daʿwa*) and propagation (*tablīgh*) with the true intention and hope for reward, all of that—save [for that person who acquires] Allah's particular focus of abundant bounty without toiling (*ijtibā'*) and being gifted with which some individuals are selected—are means to draw close to Allah and gain an affiliation (*nisba*) to Him when it is done with faith, hope for reward, presence of mind and diligence.

There is nothing preventing means from being various and paths from being many for indeed the purpose is one. There is no doubt that all of the Shaykh al-Islam's conditions show with clarity that he was successful in achieving that purpose. This is what I wish to clarify in the following lines.

Measuring Man's Perfection and the Sign of Him Reaching the Level of Wilayah and Its Verification

We are capable of bearing witness for a man that he is from the knowers of Allah (*ʿārifs*) and perfect verifiers (*muḥaqqiq al-kāmilīn*) and from among those whom Allah has accepted (*qubūl*) by looking at their spiritual states (*ḥāl*), tastes (*dhawq*) and general habits by which they lived. There is not, for this,

an apparent gauge or logical proof, and at times mistakes can be made by he who has been granted sound temperament and pure taste; on account of his abundant studying of the spiritual conditions of the knowers of Allah and the men of Allah and his remaining firm in their company with depth of mind and love (*wijdān*) he is able, with this, to pass judgment. However, there are signs and conditions with which it can be understood that the level of a religious man is loftier than the level of general people, and that he benefits from the manners of the men of Allah, their spiritual tastes, and the correct understanding of religion.

For example, to have a special disposition for servitude (*ʿubūdiyya*), turning to Allah, taste for worship and to be absorbed in that, enjoyment from supplicating, earnestly praying and asceticism, to be cut off from the material world and to hold it in contempt, natural disposition to be generous, giving preference to others over one's self, humility and swallowing one's pride, tranquillity, happiness, totality in following the Sunnah, acceptance among the pious, testimony of *ʿulamā'* for him, vigor of his followers and dear ones in religion, their pious conduct and other characteristics like that. In respect to that, we shall quote for readers the testimonies of the contemporaries of the Shaykh al-Islam and what the historians have registered in their books regarding these features which have been mentioned...

The *ʿallāma* and researcher al-Nadwi (may Allah protect him) has expanded on this, something that has been rendered in an extremely pleasant and beautiful way. We shall, however, omit this for brevity's sake and it is Allah Who is the Granter of *tawfīq*.

We shall now quote excerpts from other contemporary writers and that is the doctor, the researcher and erudite scholar Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Bannānī from his book *Mawqif al-Imām Ibn Taymiyyah min al-Taṣawwuf wa'l-Ṣūfiyya*, first published by Umm al-Qura University, Makkah al-Mukarramah, in 1406 AH. The erudite doctor writes at the beginning of the book under the title, *Summary of the Treatise*:

This treatise, *Mawqif al-Imām ibn Taymiyyah min al-Taṣawwuf wa'l-Ṣūfiyya*, as is clear from its title, consists of some of the issues that the Sufis wrote about and what came to pass between them in terms of discussions and debates; it presents that from their point of view and that from which they drew conclusions for their views. It then clarifies the stance of Imām Ibn Taymiyyah in regards to this topic in terms of either criticism or support, and with ambiguity or detail.

In the meantime, the correct view that deserves to be supported becomes distinct from the faulty view that deserves to be rejected. From the whole of that, the overall stance of Imām Ibn Taymiyyah regarding Taṣawwuf and the Sufis becomes clear.

It appears to me that Imām Ibn Taymiyyah definitely did not treat Taṣawwuf in general with enmity, rather he rejected that which did not agree with the Book and the Sunnah and which was not transmitted from any of the Companions and Followers.

It has also become clear to us in the discussed issues known by the Sufis as stations (*maqāmāt*) and spiritual states (*aḥwāl*) that Imām Ibn Taymiyyah was more knowledgeable and specific in describing and detailing some of them than other Sufis and others who wrote regarding these subjects...

◈ ◈ ◈

Similarly, he writes at the end of the book:

Secondly, the subject of our treatise is to show the stance of Imām Ibn Taymiyyah regarding Taṣawwuf and if he was right or wrong. It has become clear to us in this treatise that verily Imām Ibn Taymiyyah adopted a true and honest gauge in taking stock of these people—take note this was the Book and the Sunnah.

Whoever treads on this way without straying even as much as a finger then he is on the truth and the right path, and deserving of praise and compliment. Whoever strays from among them from this correct way, turning from the straight path, then Imām Ibn Taymiyyah would pass judgment that his action and opinion are invalid.

We end this chain of citations from the writings of contemporary researchers with what the researcher Dr. Majid ʿIrsān al-Kaylānī, professor at the Faculty of Tarbiyyah at King ʿAbdul ʿAzīz University—a branch of [the University of] Madinah al-Munawwara—has mentioned in his book *Al-Fikr al-Tarbawī ʿind Ibn Taymiyyah*. Dr. al-Kaylānī writes on p. 18:

The significance of the works of Henri Laoust[143] is that he is the first researcher who focused on opposing the hostile tone regarding Ibn Taymiyyah in Western academic circles and presented a more superior and positive image of this Muslim thinker and his standing in the history of Islamic thinking.

143— Henri Laoust (1905–1983) was a French orientalist. (IN)

Professor George Makdisi[144] has tread along the path of Laoust in three of his papers that he wrote regarding Ibn Taymiyyah in a focused and academic way:

1. Ibn Taymiya's Autograph Manuscript on Istiḥsān[145]
2. Ibn Taymiya: A Sufi of the Qadiriya Order[146]
3. The Tanbih of Ibn Taymiya on Dialectic[147]

In all of these three papers, George Makdisi has tried to establish the mistake of Duncan MacDonald[148] in terms of his antagonistic observations regarding Ibn Taymiyyah when he assumed that Ibn Taymiyyah was only a selfish man and that "he did not benefit the path of asceticism, philosophy or religion, and he only intended to benefit his self."[149]

George Makdisi refutes this allegation by saying that the method of Ibn Taymiyyah and his lofty level of understanding Islam do not dismiss the standing of asceticism (*zuhd*)

144— George A. Makdisi (1920-2002), Emeritus Professor of Arabic & Islamic Studies in the Department of Asian & Middle Eastern (formerly Oriental) Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, was born in Detroit, Michigan. Following an early educational career in both the United States and Lebanon, Makdisi pursued graduate studies in France where he obtained the degree of *Docteur es-Lettres* at the Sorbonne in 1964. He taught at both the University of Michigan and Harvard before coming to the University of Pennsylvania as Professor of Arabic in 1973. His greatest interest was in the study of Arabic texts from the classical age of Islamic thought, and that was also the focus of his teaching. Makdisi contributed a number of crucially important works, prime among which were his two volumes, *The Rise of Colleges* (1981) and *The Rise of Humanism* (1990). (IN)

145— George Makdisi, *Ibn Taymiya's Autograph Manuscript on Istiḥsān* in G. Makdisi (ed). Arabic and Islamic Studies. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965). P.453 (al-Kaylani).

146— George Makdisi, *Ibn Taymiya: A Sufi of the Qadiriya Order* The American Journal of Arabic Studies, Vol. 1. 1973. (Leiden: E.J. Brill) pp. 118-129 (al-Kaylani).

147— George Makdisi, *The Tanbih of Ibn Taymiya on Dialectic* in, Medieval and Middle Eastern Studies, edited by Sami A. Hanna. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972), P. 285 (al-Kaylani).

148— Duncan Black MacDonald (1863-1943) was professor of Semitic languages at Hartford Theological Seminary. A Scot, he studied at the University of Glasgow. (IN)

149— Translated from the Arabic and not from the English. (IN)

and Taṣawwuf when the contents of asceticism and Taṣawwuf are transmitted correctly and are proper in content. Makdisi continued his research in this field—and the one who has a passion for Ibn Taymiyyah could be led to lengthy and in-depth research.

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He also writes on page 219:

Researchers have varied on Ibn Taymiyyah's stance regarding the Sufis and differed greatly. Writers on this topic have continuously revolved around pages of books and specialist magazines. Some, such as the orientalist D.B. MacDonald,[150] have depicted that he is equally the archenemy of Sufism and spiritual life.

Others have always insisted that Ibn Taymiyyah was not an enemy of the Sufis and that he himself was a Sufi who acquired his Sufism by way of the Qādirī *ṭarīqa*.

The reality is that which Ibn Taymiyyah set his goal on was presenting the original essence of Taṣawwuf like the school of nūrturing and moulding (*al-madrasa al-tarbawiyya*) whose fundamental purpose is refining the inner self and purifying it from its base qualities, and it is because of this he opposed every deviation that came over Taṣawwuf in those matters that single out this goal and everything that opposes the Qur'ān and Sunnah in this field.

As a starting point of this principle, Ibn Taymiyyah expresses great respect for the pioneers of asceticism and the shaykhs of Taṣawwuf who held firmly to the Qur'ān and Sunnah such as

150— MacDonald, D. B. *Development of Muslim Theology*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903. p. 273 (al-Kaylani).

Fuḍayl ibn ʿIyāḍ, Ibrāhīm ibn Adham, Sarrī al-Saqaṭī, Junayd, Ḥammād al-Dabbās, Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir al-Kīlānī and ʿAdī ibn Musāfir.

As to what George Makdisi has mentioned in respect to attributing Ibn Taymiyyah to the Qādiriyya, he has relied in that on the *silsila* of the shaykhs of Ibn Taymiyyah which begins with Muwaffaq al-Dīn ibn Qudāma, the student of ʿAbdul Qādir mentioned above and graduate of the Qādirī *madrasa* in Baghdad.

He also relied, likewise, on the respect and veneration that Ibn Taymiyyah has saturated his writings with in respect to Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir. In his letters and books he refers to Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir in the same level by which he refers to Imām Ibn Ḥanbal in the titles that he bestows on him. So he is the "Pole of the Knowers of Allah" (*quṭub al-ʿārifīn*), "Our Shaykh Abū Muḥammad May Allah Sanctify his Secret" (*qaddasa Allahu Rūhahu*), "the greatest in his era in holding firm to the Sharīʿa",[151] "Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir and his like are from the greatest shaykhs of their era in holding firm to the Sharīʿa, commanding [good] and forbidding [wrong], and turning to tasting of spiritual bliss (*dhawq*), and from the greatest shaykhs in abandoning whims (*hawā*) and carnal intentions."[152] When Ibn Taymiyyah brings an example he says: "It is because of this that Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir and his like from the righteous (*mustaqīm*) shaykhs."[153] He cites him greatly like a model who is followed in beliefs and *Sulūk*.

151— Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Fatāwā, Kitāb ʿIlm al-Sulūk*, volume 10, page 448 (al-Kaylānī).
152— Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Fatāwā, Kitāb ʿIlm al-Sulūk*, volume 10, page 488 (al-Kaylānī).
153— Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Fatāwā, Kitāb ʿIlm al-Sulūk*, volume 10, page 668 (al-Kaylānī]).

Likewise, Ibn Taymiyyah has explained many excerpts from the sayings of ʿAbdul Qādir and commented on his book, *Futūḥ al-Ghayb*, in hundreds of pages which are included within the tenth volume of [his] *Al-Fatāwā* that is entitled *Kitāb ʿIlm al-Sulūk* (*The Book of the Science of Sulūk*). In the course of the commentary, Ibn Taymiyyah presents Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir as an example that embodied correct and firm adherence to the Book and the Sunnah.

There are here some indications in the books of Ibn Taymiyyah that show that his family had a spiritual connection to Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir. For example, he mentions in *Kitāb ʿIlm al-Sulūk*: "My father narrated to me from Muhyī al-Dīn al-Naḥḥās and I believe I heard from him that he saw Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir in his dream and he was saying regarding Allah Most High: 'Whoever comes to us, we shall receive them...'" He then continues to explain this text over a number of pages...[154]

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He also writes on page 222:

Whatever the situation is, the stance that Ibn Taymiyyah took regarding the Sufis is distinct in two ways: The first is that he treated the Sufis in the exact manner with which he treated the jurists (*fuqahā'*), the *mathabs* of *fiqh* and the *ʿulamā'* of *kalam* (theologians). He was of the view that the early shaykhs of Taṣawwuf had confined their knowledge and spiritual training (*tarbiya*) to the Book and the Sunnah. As to the later ones, many of them deviated due to the effect of the new Platonism which had generally penetrated Islamic thought during the translation

154— Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Fatāwā, Kitāb ʿIlm al-Sulūk*, volume 10, page 549 (al-Kaylānī).

of Greek knowledge and that they strayed far from the correct path of asceticism (*zuhd*) and spiritual training (*al-tarbiya al-rūḥiyya*). The second is that Ibn Taymiyyah did not reject Taṣawwuf in its entirety and only disapproved that which befell it in terms of leaving the primary goals and the ways of spiritual training and *Sulūk*. Regarding that he said: "The Sufis have established their matter on intention (*irāda*) and that is important. This is, however, with the condition that the intention is with Allah alone in fulfilling what He commands."[155]

He also says: "That corruption in beliefs and actions that befell these people (the Sufis) necessitated that many groups totally rejected the original path of the Sufis until those who erred were of two types: one type that affirms its being right and also wrong and another type that negates its being right and wrong, positions on which there are the people of theology and *Fiqh*. The only correct position is affirming that which is, in this matter and others, in agreement with the Book and the Sunnah, and rejecting that which is, in this matter and others, contrary to the Book and the Sunnah."[156]

We shall now begin, with the tawfiq of Allah Most High, to mention various excerpts from the writings of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah himself, and that is from his various books in relation to Taṣawwuf within which the Sufi leaders and their conditions are mentioned. We shall first begin with his detailed and wide-ranging book.

155— Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Fatāwā, Kitāb 'Ilm al-Sulūk*, volume 10, pages 486-516 (al-Kaylānī).

156— Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Fatāwā, Kitāb 'Ilm al-Sulūk*, volume 10, page 82 (al-Kaylānī).

1. *Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah* (compiled and codified by ʿAbdur Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Qāsim al-ʿĀṣimī al-Najdi al-Ḥanbalī with the help of his son, Muḥammad). First edition: 1381 AH, Maṭbaʿa al-Riyadh. Vol. 11, p. 5:

The Shaykh al-Islam (may Allah sanctify his soul) was asked regarding the Sufis and whether they are a group and whether the *fuqarā'* are also a group. What is the characteristic of each type? What is necessary for him [the Sufi] to do and preferred for him to tread upon?

He responded: All praise is for Allah. As for the word Sufism, this word did not become popular during the [first] three generations, its mention only became popular after that. Speech regarding it has been conveyed from more than one of the Imāms and shaykhs such as Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī and others. It has been narrated from Sufyān al-Thawrī that he has spoken regarding this. Some of them mention this from Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. They have differed over the meaning to which the [the word] Sufi is attributed to, in that is it one of the descriptive nouns of affinity (*asmā' al-nasab*) such as al-Qurashī, al-Madanī and their like. It has been said that it is attributed to the Ahl al-Ṣuffa (People of the Platform) and this is incorrect because if it were the case then they would be called *ṣuf-fī*. It is also said that it is attributed to *al-ṣaff al-muqaddam* (the foremost rank) in front of Allah and this is also incorrect because if it were the case then they would be called *ṣaf-fī*. It is also said that it is attributed to *al-ṣafwa min khalq Allah* (the choicest of individuals from the creation of Allah) and this is also incorrect because

if it were then they would be called *ṣafawī*. It is also said that it is attributed to Ṣūfah ibn Bishr ibn Addī ibn Ṭābikha, an Arabian tribe that used to inhabit Makkah in ancient times towards whom the ascetic attributed themselves. This, even if it is in agreement to the attribution in terms of the word, is also weak because these people are not famous and are unknown to the majority of the ascetics; this is because if the ascetics are attributed to these people then this lineage would have been superior in the era of the Companions, the Followers, and the Followers of the Followers, and also because the majority of those who speak regarding the word Sufi do not know this tribe and are not content with being attributed to a tribe from the Era of Ignorance (Jāhiliyya) which does not exist in Islam.

It is said, and this is popular, that it is attributed to the wearing of *ṣūf* (wool); for indeed the Sufis first appeared in Basra and the first to build a small house for the Sufis were some of the companions of ʿAbdul Wāḥid ibn Zayd,[157] and ʿAbdul Wāḥid was among the companions of Ḥasan [al-Baṣrī]. In Basra, there was a great deal of asceticism (*zuhd*), worship, fear [of Allah] and their like which were not present in the people of other lands. It is because of this that it would be said: *Fiqh* is from Kufa and worship is from Basra.

Abu'l-Shaykh al-Asbahānī has narrated from his chain from Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn that news reached him about a group of people who preferred woollen clothes. He said, "Surely, the community that prefers wool says that they resemble Masīḥ

157— ʿAbdul Wāḥid ibn Zayd (d. 793) was a successor of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and *shaykh* of Fuḍayl ibn ʿIyāḍ. He prominently features in several Sufi *silsilas*, including that of the Chishti Ṭarīqa. (IN)

ibn Maryam whereas the guidance of our Prophet is dearer to us. The Prophet ﷺ used to wear cotton etc." He said some words to this effect.

It is because of this that the majority of extreme narrations relating to this subject that have been narrated are only from the worshippers from among the people of Basra, such as the story of those who died or became unconscious when hearing the Qur'ān etc., namely the story of Zurāra ibn Awfā, the *qāḍī* of Basra, who recited in the Fajr prayer *"And when the trumpet shall be blown"* (*Al-Muddaththir*: 8) and fell dead. Then there is the story of Abū Juhayr al-A'mā who died when Ṣāliḥ al-Murrī recited to him. Likewise, there are others regarding whom it is narrated that they died by listening to its recitation. Among them was a group who would fall unconscious when hearing the Qur'ān and there were none among the Companions whose condition was like this. So, when this appeared a group of the Companions and Followers disapproved of it such as Asmā' bint Abū Bakr, 'Abdullah ibn al-Zubayr, Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn and others.

Those who disapprove have two contentions. Among them are those who feel that this behavior is affectation and pretentious. It is mentioned regarding Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn that he said, "There is nothing between us and those who fall unconscious on hearing the Qur'ān except that it is recited on one of them while he is on a wall. If he were to fall, then he is truthful."

Among them are those who condemned this as they saw it as an innovation contrary to what is recognized from the guidance of the Companions, as has been conveyed from Asmā' [bint Abū Bakr] and her son, 'Abdullah [ibn Zubayr].

That on which the majority of the scholars [agree] is that when one of them is overcome then he should not be rebuked, while the condition of remaining in composure is superior to that. It is because of this that when Imām Aḥmad was asked regarding this, he said, "The Qurʾān was recited on Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān who fell unconscious and if anyone was able to repel this from himself then Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd would have done so. I did not see anyone wiser than he." And he mentioned things like this. It has been narrated from al-Shāfiʿī that he said this was correct. The story of ʿAlī ibn Fuḍayl ibn ʿIyāḍ is famous. In sum, he is from the multitude of those in whose truthfulness there is no doubt.

However, the condition of the Companions is mentioned in the Qurʾān and that is that their hearts become fearful, eyes shed tears and bodies shivered... Those who have hard hearts on which there is rust and aversion for religion, which is reprehensible, criticize the situation of these people—and they surely have. There are among them those who think that their condition is the most perfect, complete and lofty. Both extremes in these matters are reprehensible.

Rather, there are three levels. The first is the situation of he who is oppressing his self (*ẓālim li-nafsihī*); he is hard hearted and does not soften to hearing [the Qurʾān] and *dhikr*...

The second is the situation of the Allah-fearing believer in whom there is weakness in tolerating that which comes on his heart. He is the one who is afflicted by death or unconsciousness for that is only according to the strength of the feeling that comes and the weakness of the heart to bear it. The likes of this is at times found in he who is happy, or fearful, or sorrowful, or

loves worldly matters. It kills him, or makes him sick, or causes him to lose his mind. From among the worshippers of images there are those who fall ill because of love, or die, or become insane; the situation is similar in others. This only happens to that person on whose soul a feeling appears and his soul is weak to repel it; this is similar to those causes that make a person ill or cause him to die. Or it may be that one of them overcomes them...

These conditions that are associated with unconsciousness, death, insanity, a feeling of intoxication (*sukr*) or annihilation (*fanā'*) until he does not feel himself etc., when their causes are sanctioned in Sharī'a and the person involved is sincere and unable to repel them, then he is praiseworthy for the righteousness he has done and the īmān he has attained; he is also excused in that matter in which he is powerless and which afflicted him without choice. Such individuals are more perfect than those who have not reached their status due to imperfection in their īmān, hard heartedness and other causes that consist of abandoning that which Allah loves and doing that which Allah dislikes.

However, he whose mind remains stable while he has attained that īmān that they have attained or its like or more, then he is superior to them. This was the condition of the Companions ﷺ and the condition of our Prophet ﷺ, for indeed he was taken to the heavens and Allah showed him what he showed him and in the morning he was like the one who slept at night, his condition had not changed him. Hence, his condition was superior to the condition of Mūsā ﷺ who fell unconscious when his Lord appeared to the mountain, and the

condition of Mūsā was excellent, lofty and great. However, the condition of Muḥammad ﷺ was greater in perfection, loftier and superior.

The purpose [of the above text] is that these matters in which there was increased worship and spiritual states (*aḥwāl*) came from Basra and that was because of intense fear. Indeed, that which they mention from the fear of ʿUtba al-Ghulām and ʿAṭā' al-Sulaymī and their like is a great matter. There is no doubt that their condition was more perfect and superior than he who has no fear of Allah to compare with or supersede them. He who fears Allah in a moderate manner, they call him to do that which Allah loves and leave that which Allah dislikes without this increase, then his spiritual condition is more perfect and superior than these others. This was the condition of the Companions ﷺ. It has been narrated that ʿAṭā' al-Sulaymī ﷺ was seen after his death. He was asked, "What did Allah do with you?" He responded, "I was told, O ʿĀṭā', were you ashamed of me that you feared me to such an extent? Did you not know that I am the Most Forgiving and the Most Merciful?"

Likewise, in relation to that which is mentioned from the likes of these people in terms of [their] spiritual conditions of asceticism, fear of Allah, worship etc., at times there is mentioned some increase over the condition of the Companions ﷺ and the way shown by the Prophet ﷺ; these are matters in which people can be categorized into two: There is a community that derides them and finds fault in them, at times they exceed the limit in this; and there is a community which exceeds the limit within them and they consider this path the most perfect and lofty.

The truth is that they are in these forms of worship and spiritual conditions *mujtahidūn* (one who exercises independent reasoning [*ijtihād*]) just like their neighbors from the people of Kufa are *mujtahidūn* in issues relating to the judiciary, state, etc. It was among them that *ra'y* (independent opinion) emerged which was contrary to the Sunnah and which the majority of the people disapproved. The elite from the people of *Fiqh* and *ra'y* (*Ahl al-Fiqh wa al-Ra'y*) from the people of Kufa are dealt with in two ways: there is a community that derides them and exceeds the limit in relation to them, and another community that exceeds the limit in praising them and considers them more knowledgeable in *Fiqh* than those besides them. At times, they raise them over the Companions, just as the extremists from those worshippers at times raise them over the Companions. And this is an issue in which people are disunited.

What is correct for the Muslim is that the best word is the word of Allah, the best way is the way of Muḥammad ﷺ, the best of eras is that in which he was sent, and the best of ways and paths to Allah is that on which he and his Companions were. It can be understood from this that it is necessary on the believers that they fear Allah according to their effort and capacity as He Most High has said: "*Fear Allah as much as you can*". (64:16) The Prophet ﷺ said, "When I order you something, complete it as much as you can." He Most High said: "*Allah does not burden a soul save according to its capacity.*" (2:286) Indeed, many of the believers—the Allah-fearing *walis* of Allah—at times acquire that perfect knowledge and faith (īmān) that was gained by the Companions, hence they fear Allah as much as they can and

obey according to their efforts. It is inevitable that he carries out a mistake, either in his knowledge and sayings, or in his actions and conditions. They are rewarded for their obedience and pardoned for their mistakes for indeed Allah Most High has said, "*The Prophet has brought faith on that which his Lord has sent to him and also the believers; all of them have brought faith on Allah, His messengers, His books and His prophets; [they say] we do not differentiate between any of His prophets and they say, 'We have heard and are obedient, forgive us our Lord and to you is the coming.' Allah does not obligate anyone beyond his capacity. For him is what he has earned, and on him what he has incurred. 'Our Lord, do not hold us accountable, if we forget or make a mistake.'*" *(2:185-286) Allah Most High says, I have done so.*

Hence, he who makes the way of one of the scholars and jurists, or the way of one of the worshippers or ascetics superior to the way of the Companions, he is mistaken, in error, and an innovator. Also, he who regards as derided, at fault and detested every *mujtahid* in matters of obedience who has made a mistake in some matter, then he too is in error and an innovator...[158]

When it is understood that the source of Taṣawwuf was Basra and that in it there were those who treaded the path of worship and asceticism in matters in which there are *ijtihād* just like in Kufa there were those who treaded the path of *Fiqh* and knowledge in matters in which there are *ijtihād*. They are associated with an external manner of dress, which is the wearing of wool (*ṣūf*). Hence, it is said regarding any one of them, "*Ṣūfī*". Their

158—Take note of this text and compare it with what is said by some of them in relation to some of the Sufi shaykhs, and when you ask them what the Sufis' sin was, they will mention that their being Sufis is their biggest sin.

way is not confined to the wearing of wool nor did they make that compulsory or command it. Rather, they have been associated with that because of its being the external appearance.

Taṣawwuf according to them has some realities and spiritual states (*aḥwāl*) that are well known; they have spoken regarding its limits, path and manners such as the saying of some of them that the Sufi is he who has been cleansed from impurity and filled with thought [of Allah]; for him gold and stone are equal. Taṣawwuf is the concealing of the good qualities of a person and abandoning pretensions and their like. With the word Sufi they head to the meaning of *ṣiddīq*. The most superior of individuals after the prophets are the *ṣiddīqūn*. It is as Allah Most High mentions: *"They are with those on whom Allah has favored from the prophets, the ṣiddīqūn, the martyrs and the pious. And excellent are they as companions."* (4:69) It is because of this that there are, according to them, none after the prophets who were more superior than the Sufi. However, he is in reality a type of *ṣiddīq*. They are *ṣiddīqūn* who have specialized in asceticism and worship according to the way in which they have carried out *ijtihād*. Hence, the *ṣiddīq* is from the people of this path. It is as it is said: *ṣiddīq al-ʿulamā'* (*ṣiddīq* of the *ʿulamā'*) and *ṣiddīq al-umarā'* (*ṣiddīq* from among the leaders). He is more special than the general *ṣiddīq* and less than the *ṣiddīq* who is perfect in his *ṣiddīqiyya*, namely the Companions, the Followers and the Followers of the Followers.

So, when it is said regarding these ascetics and worshippers from the people of Basra that they are *ṣiddīqūn*, then this is as it is said regarding the Imāms of the jurists from the people of Kufa—that they are also *ṣiddīqūn*. Each of them is such

according to the way that he has treaded in terms of obedience to Allah and His Prophet, according to his *ijtihād*. At times they may be from the greatest *ṣiddīqūn* in their era and so they will be the most perfect *ṣiddīqūn* of their age. The *ṣiddīq* of the First Era is more perfect than them and the *ṣiddīqūn* are of different levels and types. It is because of this that each of them has a category of spiritual state and worship that he has realized and perfected and mastered even though there is someone else in a different category that is more perfect and superior than him.

Because of the *ijtihād* and debates that occurred among many of them, the people have differed with each other in relation to their path. There is a group that has derided the Sufis and Taṣawwuf and said that they are innovators and outside of the Sunnah. Speech in relation to this has been narrated from the Imāms of this group, which is well known, and a group of the people of Fiqh and Kalam (theology) have followed them in this. There is a group that has exceeded the limits in relation to them and claimed that they are the most superior of the creation and the most perfect after the prophets. Both sides in these issues are blameworthy.[159]

What is correct is that they are *mujtahidūn* in the obedience of Allah in the way that others aside from them from the people who are obedient to Allah have done *ijtihād*. Among them is he who has gone ahead and drawn close according to his *ijtihād*, and among them is he who is moderate and is from the people of the right (*ahl al-yamīn*). In each of these two groups, there is he who at times performs *ijtihād* and then errs.

159— Those who affiliate themselves to the Salaf, especially Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, should take note of this text.

Among them is he who commits a sin and then repents or does not. Among those who attribute themselves to them is he who oppresses his self and disobeys his Lord.

A group from the people of innovation and heresy has also attributed themselves to them. However, according to the authentic people of Taṣawwuf, they are not from them, like al-Ḥallāj[160] for example. Indeed, the majority of the shaykhs of Taṣawwuf have rejected him and cast him out of the path, such as Junayd ibn Muḥammad, the *sayyid al-ṭā'ifa*, as Shaykh Abū ʿAbdur Raḥmān al-Sulamī has mentioned in *Ṭabaqāt al-Sūfiyya* and Ḥāfiẓ Abū Bakr al-Khaṭīb in *Tārīkh Baghdad*. This is the original Taṣawwuf.

Then, after that, it went into groups and types and the Sufis became three: *Ṣūfiyya al-Ḥaqā'iq* (Sufi of the Knowledge of Allah), *Ṣūfiyya al-Arzāq* (Sufi in Search of Material Gain) and *Ṣūfiyya al-Rasm* (The Ceremonial Sufi). As to the *Ṣūfiyya al-Ḥaqā'iq*, they are the ones we have described. As to the *Ṣūfiyya al-Arzāq*, they are the ones who have endowments (*waqf*) entrusted to them such as the *khanqahs*. It is not a condition among them that they are people of the Knowledge of Allah (*ḥaqā'iq*) as that is a great matter. The majority of the people of *ḥaqā'iq* are not characterised as having *khanqahs*. However, it is a precondition that there are three conditions in them:

The first is Sharīʿa integrity in that they fulfill the obligatory acts (*farḍ*) and abstain from the forbidden (*ḥarām*); the second

160— For an alternative view, Shaykh al-Hadith Mawlānā Muḥammad Zakarīyya Kandhalwi has touched on Shaykh Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj citing Ḥakīm al-Ummah Mawlānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānawī in his book *Sharīʿat wa Ṭarīqat ka Talāzum*. Mawlānā Zafar Aḥmad ʿUthmānī also has a detailed book on Shaykh Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj that provides a different view regarding him entitled *Sīrat-i- Manṣūr Ḥallāj*. (IN)

is learning the etiquettes (*ādāb*) of the people of the path, and that is the etiquettes of Sharīʿa at all times. As to the created and innovated rituals, then they do not turn to them; and the third is that none of them clings to excessive worldly material. As to he who hoards wealth or does not have praiseworthy etiquettes and has not learned Sharīʿa manners or is a *fāsiq*, then he is not deserving of that.

As to the *Ṣūfiyya al-Rasm*, they are restricted according to their understanding to attire and created rituals etc. They are, among the Sufis, on the level of he who restricts to wearing the attire of the people of knowledge and the people of jihād. They modify their speech and actions in a way that the ignorant assumes the reality of his condition is that he is from them, when he is not...

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He then discusses at length the word *faqīr* until he mentions:

... However, when asceticism (*zuhd*) became prominent among the *fuqarâ'*, [the word] *faqr*, in the nomenclature of many of the people, came to define the path of *zuhd* which is a form of Taṣawwuf. Hence, when it is said, "In him there is *faqr* or there is no *faqr* in him," the meaning is not that he does not have wealth. What is, however, meant by that is what is meant by the word Sufi—namely knowledge of Allah (*maʿrifa*), spiritual states (*aḥwāl*), manners (*akhlāq*) and etiquettes (*ādāb*), etc.

According to this terminology, they have differed regarding which is superior: the *faqīr* or the Sufi? A group has gone

towards preferring the Sufi such as Abū Ja'far al-Suhrawardī and his like. A group has gone towards preferring the *faqīr* such as other groups. At times, these are specially characterized by *zāwiyas* and those with *khanqahs*, etc. And the majority of people prefer the *faqīr*.

Precisely speaking, the superior of the two is he who is more Allah-fearing. Hence, if the Sufi is more fearing of Allah then he shall be superior to the other. That is, by him being greater in abundantly doing those actions that Allah loves and abandoning what he dislikes, he is greater than the *faqīr*. If the *faqīr* abundantly performs those actions that Allah loves and abandons those that He dislikes, then he shall be superior to the other. And if they are equal in performing beloved actions and leaving unloved actions, then they shall be equal in status.

The *walis* of Allah are the Allah-fearing believers, regardless if one of them is named *faqīr*, Sufi, jurist (*faqīh*), *'ālim*, businessman, soldier, craftsman, prince, ruler or anything else. Allah Most High mentions, *"Be attentive, the friends of Allah shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve—those who believe and are Allah fearing."* (10:62/63)

2. Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah mentions in *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, vol. 11, p. 25:

He was asked: What do the jurists, may Allah be pleased with them, say regarding a man who says, "Certainly, we are not devoted to *faqr*,[161] we have not been ordered to follow it. It has no body or any meaning. It is not a path that connects to the pleasure of Allah Most High and the pleasure of His

161—The word *faqr* here is being used to denote Ṭaṣawwuf. (IN)

Prophet. We are only focused on following the command of Allah and abstaining from what He has forbidden, namely [following] the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His prophet ﷺ. Certainly, the base of everything is knowledge, focusing on it and acting on it, fear of Allah (*taqwā*) and abstaining from what is haram. The "*faqr*" on the tongues of the group[162] and the seniors (*akābir*) is abstinence (*zuhd*) from the world and Sharīʿa knowledge benefits abstinence from the world. Hence, abstinence from the world and acting on knowledge is *faqr*. Therefore, *faqr* is a branch from the branches of knowledge and the matter is like this. There is no path that connects more [to Allah] than knowledge and acting on knowledge according to that which is correct and established from the Prophet ﷺ"

He also says, "Indeed, the *faqr* named and known by the majority of the People of Garb (*Ahl al-Zayy*) that has become prevalent in our era in terms of habitual dress, words and nomenclature is not pleasing to Allah or to His Prophet." Is the matter like he says or different? Answer us, you shall be rewarded.

Shaykh Taqī al-Dīn ibn Taymiyyah, may Allah be pleased with him, answered: All praise is for Allah. The basis of this issue is that words that have been mentioned in the Book and the Sunnah, it is our duty that we follow that which they denote. For example, the words faith, piety, fear of Allah (*taqwā*), truth, justice, goodness, patience, thankfulness, reliance (*tawakkul*), fear and hope (*khawf wa rajāʾ*), love for Allah, obedience to Allah and the Prophet, kindness to parents and fulfilling promises etc. are from those matters which imply the mention of

162— *Al-ṭāʾifa*, which refers to the Sufis. (IN)

that which Allah and His Prophet love from the heart and the body. Hence, these matters that Allah and His Prophet love are the way to reach Allah while at the same time abandoning that which Allah and His Prophet have forbidden, namely disbelief, hypocrisy, lying, sins, enmity, oppression, being impatient, polytheism, stinginess, cowardice, hard-heartedness, treachery, breaking ties with relatives, etc. It is the duty of every Muslim to look at what Allah and His Prophet have commanded and to fulfill it and also look at that which Allah and His Prophet have forbidden and to abandon it. This is the path of Allah, His way and His religion, the Straight Path, the path of those on whom Allah has favored from the prophets, the *ṣiddīqūn*, the martyrs and the pious.

This is the Straight Path (*al-Sirāṭ al-Mustaqīm*) that consists of knowledge and actions: Sharīʿa knowledge and Sharīʿa actions. Hence, he who knows and does not act on his knowledge, he is a sinner (*fājir*) and he who acts without knowledge is astray. Allah Most High has ordered that we say: *"Take us on the straight path. The path of those on whom You have bestowed Your grace, not of those who have incurred Your wrath, nor of those who have gone astray."* (1:6-7) The Prophet ﷺ said, "The Jews are those who have incurred the wrath on them, and the Christians are those who have gone astray." That is because the Jews recognised the truth and did not act on it and the Christians worshipped Allah without knowledge.

It is because of this that the Salaf used to say, "Fear the tribulation (*fitna*) of a sinful (*fājir*) scholar and an ignorant worshipper for indeed their *fitna* is a *fitna* for every person who has been afflicted." They also used to say, "He who has become

corrupt from among the scholars has a similarity to the Jews and he who has become corrupt from the worshippers has a similarity to the Christians." Hence, he who calls to knowledge without action (*ʿamal*) in something that has been commanded is astray, and he who calls to action (*ʿamal*) without knowledge is astray. More astray than them both is he who treads in knowledge the path of the people of innovation and follows matters that are contrary to the Book and the Sunnah, which he assumes is knowledge when it is ignorance. Similar is he who treads in [matters of] worship the path of the people of innovation. He carries out actions that are contrary to the actions that have been legislated in Sharīʿa and which he assumes are acts of worship when they are acts of deviance. Both of these are many among those who are astray and attribute themselves to Fiqh and *faqr*. They come together in that they call to knowledge without action and action without knowledge. That which they call towards is an innovation (*bidʿa*), which is contrary to the Sharīʿa. The path of Allah is not complete save with knowledge and action, both of which should be in agreement with the Sharīʿa.

Therefore, the one treading the path of *faqr*, Taṣawwuf, *zuhd* and worship, if he does not tread with knowledge that is in agreement with the Sharīʿa, then he is astray from the path and that which he ruins is greater than that which he corrects. The one following *Fiqh*, knowledge, speculative reasoning (*naẓr*) and *Kalam*, if he does not follow the Sharīʿa and act on its knowledge, then he shall be a sinner and astray from the path. This is the foundation upon which it is necessary for every Muslim to remain focused on.

As to bigotry (*taʿaṣṣub*) in relation to issues for which there is no guidance from Allah, then this is an act of ignorance: *"And who is more astray than he who followed his desire without any guidance from Allah."* (28:5)

There is no doubt that the word *faqr* in the Book and the Sunnah and in the language of the Companions, Followers and the Followers of the Followers is not used to intend the Path of Allah (*ṭarīq*), doing that which He ordained, abandoning that which he forbade, praiseworthy manners, etc. Rather, *faqr* according to them is the antonym of rich (*ghinā*). The *fuqarā'* are those whom Allah has mentioned when He said, *"The ṣadaqa (prescribed charity) is only to be given to the poor (fuqarā') and the destitute..."* (9:60) and in His saying, *"(Your charities should be preferably meant) for the needy (fuqarā') who are confined in the way of Allah..."* (2:273) and His saying, *"For the poor (fuqarā') emigrants who were expelled from their homes and properties..."* (59:8) The rich (*ghanī*) is he for whom taking of Zakah is not permissible or he on whom Zakah is incumbent or that which is similar to that. However, when *faqr* was inferred as willing or unwilling asceticism (*zuhd*), because it is from [divine] protection that you are incapable, many of those of the latter times began to associate *faqr* with the meaning of asceticism (*zuhd*); asceticism at times can be with wealth and at times with poverty. Hence, among the prophets and the first to accept Islam there were those who were ascetic in spite of their abundant wealth.

Zuhd that is prescribed is the abandoning of that which does not benefit in the hereafter. As to everything that the slave takes support from in the obedience of Allah, then abandoning it is not from the prescribed asceticism; rather, what is prescribed

is abandoning the surplus that preoccupies from the obedience of Allah and His Prophet. Likewise, during the second century, they began to describe that with the word Sufi because the wearing of wool (*ṣūf*) is predominant among the ascetics...

3. Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah mentions in *Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā*, vol. 11, p. 70:

As to those who came later, the [word] *faqīr* in their nomenclature is the name for the wayfarer (*sālik*) heading towards Allah Most High, as is also the Sufi in their terminology. Then, among them is he who gives preference to the word Sufi over the word *faqīr* because the Sufi has corrected the esoteric and the exoteric; and among them is he who prefers the word *faqīr* since, according to him, the *faqīr* has broken all connections and is not, exoterically, preoccupied with issues that are not necessary. This debate is to do with semantics and terminology.

The truth is that the praiseworthy meaning of both these names (*faqīr* and Sufi) are included within the words *ṣiddīq*, *walī*, *ṣāliḥ* and other similar words that appear in the Book and the Sunnah, and when it (the praiseworthy meaning) enters the Prophetic names then the ruling mentioned within the Prophet's teachings (*risāla*) shall firmly apply. As to those matters by which these words are given distinction, namely the said person is considered superior when it is not a cause of superiority, or those issues on account of which one considers the said person to be a *walī* and other similar matters which cause an increased rank in faith and the world, then these matters are void in Sharīʿa except when they are from among those issues that are permissible such as handicrafts. There is no problem in this on

the condition that one does not believe that these permissible matters are recommended. As to that which has been adjoined to that, namely that which is disliked in the religion of Allah in terms of various types of innovations and sinfulness, it is necessary to forbid them as has been mentioned in the Sharīʿa.

4. Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah mentions in *Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā*, vol. 11, p. 194:

There is nothing by which the *awliyā'* of Allah are, exoterically (outwardly), set apart from people in those matters that are permissible; hence, they are not set apart on account of one garment or another when both are permissible, nor with shaving the head or shortening or plaiting it when it is permissible. It is as it is said, "So many *ṣiddīqūn* are dressed in *qabā'* and so many heretics are dressed in the *ʿabā'*."[163] Rather, the *awliyā'* are found in all of the groups within the Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ as long as they are not from the people of apparent innovation and sin. They are found among the people of the Qur'ān and the people of knowledge, and among the people of jihād and sword, and among traders, craftsmen and husbandmen. Allah has mentioned the qualities of the Ummah of Muḥammad ﷺ in His saying, *"Your Lord knows that you stand (in prayer) for nearly two thirds of the night, and (at times) for half of it, and (at times) for one third of it, and (so do) a group of those who are with you. And Allah measures the night and the day. He knows that you (O Muslims,) cannot do it in a regular way; therefore He turned to you in mercy. Now, recite as much of*

163—The *qabā'* was a tight-fitting overcoat that is short with narrow sleeves and which used to be generally worn by ordinary people whereas the *'abā'* is a wide and long rectangular cloak with large black or brown stripes that used to be worn by people of religious rank. (IN)

the Qurʾān as is easy (for you). He knows that some of you may be sick, and others travelling in the land, seeking the grace of Allah, and yet others fighting in Allah's way. Therefore, recite as much of it as is easy". (73:20)

The Salaf used to call the people of religion and knowledge *al-Qurrāʾ*, and the scholars and ascetics were included among them. The name Sufi and *fuqarāʾ* (s. *faqīr*) was created thereafter. The name Sufi is attributed to the wearing of wool (*ṣūf*)—this is correct. It is said that it is attributed to *ṣafwa al-fuqahāʾ* (the choicest from the jurists), and it is said to Ṣūfa ibn ʿAdī ibn Ṭābīkha, an Arabian tribe that used to be known for asceticism. It is said that it is attributed to the Ahl al-Suffah (People of the Platform), Mount Ṣafa, the word *al-ṣafwa* (the selected ones) and it is said to *al-ṣaff al-muqaddam* (the foremost rank) in front of Allah Most High. These opinions are weak for if it were like this then it would be said *ṣaf-fi*, *ṣafaʾī*, *ṣafawī* or *ṣafī* and not Sufi.

The name *fuqarāʾ* has also begun to mean the people of Sulūk and this is a recent usage. People are in dispute as to which is superior: the word Sufi or the word *faqīr*. They are also in dispute as to which is superior: the wealthy person who is thankful or the poor person who is patient...

5. Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah mentions in *Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā*, vol. 11, p. 320, after a delicate discussion regarding *khāriq*:

Hence, in summary, that which ruptures the natural order of things (*khāriq*)[164] is of three types: praiseworthy in religion,

164— *Khāriq al-ʿāda* is an Arabic term that literally means "breaking the natural order of things" and is used to technically describe the miraculous or supernatural. (IN)

blameworthy in religion, and permissible—not praiseworthy or blameworthy—in the religion. If the permissible has a benefit then it is a blessing and if it does not have a benefit then it is like the other permissible actions in which there is no benefit such as playing and futile pursuits.

Abū ʿAlī al-Jūzjānī[165] said: "Be a seeker of steadfastness, not a seeker of miracles for indeed your carnal self (*nafs*) is predisposed to seek miracles and your Lord seeks steadfastness from you." Shaykh Suhrawardī has mentioned in his *ʿAwārif* [*al-Maʿārif*]: "And that which he has mentioned is a major principle in this matter and a secret that many of the people of Sulūk and seekers are unaware of." That is because those who toil and worship have heard of the early pious predecessors and the miracles and *khāriq* that they were bestowed with; as a result, their souls continuously seek some of that and they desire to receive some of that. Perhaps one of them remains heartbroken and accuses his self in regard to the correctness of his action when nothing from that appears to him. If they were to know the secret of that, then they would attach no importance to it and they would know that Allah opens a door from that on some of those who sincerely strive. Its wisdom is that he increases in erudition on account of the *khāriq al-ʿāda* that he sees and the effects of the power. Hence, his resolve for asceticism in the world and remaining away from the beckoning of desires becomes strong.

At times, firm conviction (*ṣidq al-yaqīn*) appears to some of his slaves and the veils are removed from their hearts. He who

165— One of the major *shaykhs* of the Sufis and their Imāms ﷺ.

experiences *ṣidq al-yaqīn* has no need to see something that is *khāriq al-ʿāda* because the purpose of that (the latter) is to acquire firm conviction and that has been gained. If the person who has been bestowed with firm conviction were to experience any of that (*khāriq*) then [his] conviction would increase. The wisdom of revealing the ability to perform a *khāriq al-ʿāda* at this juncture does not mean that he (the one from who it originates) is in need of it, rather the wisdom behind it is to reveal it for another person at a place of his need. This second person will be more able and worthy than the first. Hence, the way of the sincere person is to seek steadfastness from the soul and that is in its entirety a miracle. Then, if a *khāriq* [*al-ʿāda*] were to occur in his journey then it will be as if it did not happen. He will not care and will not become deficient because of that. He only becomes deficient by neglecting the necessary right of steadfastness. Know this for indeed it is a great principle for the seekers, ascetic scholars and Sufi shaykhs.

6. Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah mentions in *Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā*, vol. 11, p. 338:

As to the way [of acquiring knowledge] through means that are rational (*ʿaqlī*), transmitted (*naqlī*), revealed (*kashfī*), informational (*khabarī*) and speculative (*naẓarī*), the way of the people of hadith (*ahl al-hadith*), the people of Kalam (theology) and the People of Taṣawwuf has been that people have contended with each other in this in support of and against. Among the people are those who have objected to it from that which they did not recognize, and among them were those who exceeded the limit in that which they recognized and

so they raised it above its worth and negated everything else. The people of Kalam and philosophers exalt the rational paths, much of which is corrupt and contradictory. Out of the creation of Allah they are the most in contradiction and dispute, each group refutes the other in that which they claim as being definite.

A group which claims [to follow] the Sunnah and hadith derive proof in that from fabricated hadiths and stories that they know are lies. At times, they take proof from something that is weak (*ḍaʿīf*) in opposition of something that is strong. Many of the Sufis and *faqīrs* are reared on dreams, spiritual taste (*dhawq*) and thoughts which they believe are *kashf* when they are actually thoughts that are not correct and ideas that are untrue. *"They only follow conjecture, and conjecture is of no avail in (the matter of) truth". (53: 28)*

We say: As to the ways of [of acquiring knowledge] of the rulings of Sharīʿa, regarding which we speak of in the principles of *Fiqh*, then—by consensus of the Muslims—they include the Book [of Allah]. None of the Imāms have disputed this as some of the deviants have in deriving proof in some issues relating to creed.

The second is the Sunnah (hadiths) that is *mutawātir*[166] and which does not oppose the apparent meaning of the Qurʾān but explains it, such as the number of prayers (Salah) and the units of prayer (*rakaʿa*), the required amount (*niṣāb*) for Zakah [to be compulsory] and its being compulsory, the descriptions

166— *Mutawātir* (or "successive") is a Hadith that is conveyed by numerous narrators in a way that it cannot be conceived that they have agreed on an untruth. Such Hadiths can be *mutawātir* in text or in meaning. (IN)

of the Hajj and the ʿUmrah, and other rulings that cannot be known without the explanation of the Sunnah...

The third way is the [acts of] Sunnah narrated *mutawātir* from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ that have been accepted by the people of knowledge or through reliable transmitters. This is also from among those things that the people of knowledge from the people of Fiqh, Hadith, Taṣawwuf and the majority of the people of knowledge are agreed upon. Some of the people of Kalam have rejected this and many of them have rejected that knowledge is acquired from any of them. They have only made knowledge compulsory and have not differentiated between what is received with acceptance and what is not...

The fourth way is Consensus (*ijmāʿ*) and that is, in sum, agreed on by the majority of Muslims from the jurists, the Sufis, the people of hadith and Kalam, and others. Some of the people of innovation from the Mutazilites and the Shiites have rejected it. However, what is known regarding it is that this is that on which the Companions were. As to that which came after then acquiring knowledge from that is not, in the main, possible...

The fifth way is analogy (*qiyās*) on a text (*naṣṣ*) and the Consensus, and this is a [source of] proof according to the majority of the jurists. However, many of the people of *raʾy* (independent opinion) exceeded the limits in this so much that they used it before discussing the text, refuted text using it and used it for wrong. From among the people of Kalam, the people of hadith and the people of analogy there are those who reject it totally and this is a major issue; the truth in relation to it lies in moderation between exceeding the limit and being lax.

The sixth way is Presumption of Continuity (*istiṣḥāb*)[167] which is that the matter remains as it is as long as its establishment or negation in Sharīʿa is not known. It is, by consensus, a proof (*ḥujja*) when the matter is unknown. However, is it [a source of] proof when it is known there is nothing? In this there is a difference of view...

The seventh way is *maṣāliḥ mursala*[168] which is that the *mujtahid* considers that an action will attract an overriding benefit (*jalb al-manfaʿa*) and within the Sharīʿa there is nothing to negate it. In this way, there is a famous difference of opinion and so the jurists call it *maṣāliḥ mursala*; and among them are those who called it *raʾy* and some of them consider *istiḥsān* to be close to it. The spiritual taste (*dhawq*) of the Sufis, their spiritual ecstasy (*wajd*) and their inspirations (*ilhām*) are close to this. Its summary is that they discover in the speech and action a common good (*maṣlaḥa*) in their hearts and in matters of religion, and experience the taste of its benefit—this is *maṣlaḥa*. However, some of the people specifically assign *maṣāliḥ mursala* to protecting lives, wealth, honor, intellect and religion. It is not like this. Rather, *maṣāliḥ mursala* is attracting a benefit and repelling harm (*daf' al-maḍarr*). That which they have mentioned in repelling harm in these five issues, then, is one of two types: [repelling harm or attracting benefit].

167— *Istiṣḥāb* is a principle of *Fiqh* and presumes that a situation known to exist in the past continues to exist until there is evidence to the contrary. This can be used in the absence of other evidences. There are several maxims based on this, for example the innocence of an accused is presumed until guilt is proved, certainty cannot be disproved by doubt and permissibility is the original state of things. (IN)

168— *Maṣāliḥ mursala* can be loosely translated as "public welfare set loose from the texts" in that discretion may be applied in judgments to overrule strict analogy in cases where the public interest would thereby be benefitted as long as the Sharīʿa is not contradicted. (IN)

Attracting benefit can be in worldly and religious matters. In worldly matters this would be in social dealings and actions in which it can be said there is a common good (*maṣlaḥa*) for the creation without there being a Sharʿī prohibition. In matters of religion, this would be in much of the spiritual knowledge (*maʿārif*), spiritual states (*aḥwāl*), acts of worship and asceticism regarding which it is said there is a common good (*maṣlaḥa*) for man without there being a Sharʿī prohibition. Hence, he who has restricted the *maṣlaḥa* to punishments [the penal code] (*ʿuqūbāt*) in which there is repelling of harm in those situations to only protect the body, then the person has restricted [the matter].

This is a major topic. Focusing on it is necessary, as great disorder has occurred within the religion on account of it. Many of the rulers, scholars and worshippers observe *maṣlaḥa* which they use on the basis of its principle. Sometimes it may be used in a way that is prohibited in the Sharīʿa without one knowing. At times, such words that are contrary to the texts [Quran and Sunnah] are given preference over the *maṣāliḥ mursala*. Many of them have been careless in applying [the principle of] *maṣlaḥa*, the consideration of which according to the Sharīʿa is compulsory on the basis that the Sharīʿa has not spoken of [the issue at hand] and, as a result, the obligatory and preferred actions are lost or the person slips into that which is prohibited and disliked. At times, the Sharīʿa has mentioned [the issue] while the person did not know.

7. Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah mentions in *Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā*, vol. 11, p. 381:

He was asked: Which is preferred—remedying that which Allah dislikes from your heart, for example jealousy, malice,

spite, pride, ostentation, desire for good reputation, showing off actions, hardness of heart and other actions that are specifically concerned with the heart in terms of its dirtiness and wickedness, or being preoccupied with the exoteric actions such as prayer (*salah*), fasting, and the various acts of drawing close such as the supererogatory prayers (*nafl*) and those actions that have been pledged while those [evil] matters exist in his heart? Answer us—may you be rewarded.

He responded, may Allah have mercy on him: All praise is for Allah. What is mandatory on him from those matters? Surely, what is most necessary is exceeding and increasing. It is as Allah Most High has said as narrated by His Prophet ﷺ: "My slave does not draw near to Me by means of those actions that I have made compulsory on him." He said: "My slave keeps drawing near to me by means of supererogatory acts of worship (*nafl*) until I love him." The exoteric actions are not correct and accepted except by means of the action of the heart, for the heart is the king and the limbs are its army. So, if the king were to be foul then his army would become foul and it is because of this that the Prophet ﷺ said: "Be attentive, surely in the body is a piece of flesh, if it is correct then the body in its entirety will be correct and if it is corrupt then the body in its entirety would be corrupt." Likewise, the actions of the heart will definitely affect the actions of the body. When what is a priority is more compulsory, regardless of whether it is known as the esoteric (*bāṭin*) or exoteric (*ẓāhir*), then at times what is known as the esoteric is more compulsory such as abandoning jealousy and pride as that is more compulsory for him than supererogatory fasts. At times that which is known

as the exoteric is more superior such as the prayer of the night, for indeed it is more superior than just abandoning some of the thoughts (*khāṭir*) that pass on the heart, namely from the genre of envy and its like. Each of the esoteric and exoteric actions supports the other and prayer (*salah*) prevents sins and wrong and creates serenity and other great effects. It is the greatest of actions along with giving charity. And Allah is the most knowledgeable.

8. Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah mentions in *Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā*, vol. 11, p. 395:

He was asked: What is the wisdom in that those preoccupied with *dhikr*, meditation (*fikr*), spiritual exercises (*riyāḍa*), struggling with the carnal self (*mujāhada al-nafs*) and similar things, in spite of their lesser knowledge and the ignorance of some of them, experience *kashf* and miracles (*karāma*) and other things such as spiritual states (*ḥāl*) that are not experienced by those who are preoccupied with knowledge and its teaching? What is the discussion regarding this? This is such that if a person was to spend the night focused and preoccupied in *dhikr* and the presence [of Allah], he would definitely see an incident or something would open up to him, and if he were to spend the night repeating a chapter from the chapters of *Fiqh* then he would not find that. The situation is such that many of the worshippers find a sweetness and bliss in *dhikr* that they do not find in the recitation of the Qur'ān even though the Sunnah has narrated the superiority of the scholar over the worshipper; this is especially the case when the worshipper is in need of knowledge to an extent that the scholar is distracted from worship in the preoccupation of knowledge.

It is mentioned in the hadith, "Indeed, the angels place their wings for the seeker of knowledge in happiness of what the seeker does, indeed the scholars are the inheritors of the prophets, indeed the superiority of the scholar over the worshipper is like the superiority of the moon over all stars." It is in a hadith narrated from the Prophet ﷺ that he said: "On the Day of Judgment, Allah Most High will say to the worshippers and the *mujāhidūn*, 'Enter Paradise.' So the scholars will say that it was through the excellence of our knowledge that they worshipped and did jihād. So Allah Most High will say to them, 'You are for Me like my angles, intercede.' They shall then intercede and enter Paradise."There are other hadiths and narrations [like this].

Then, many of the worshippers prefer worship over seeking knowledge in spite of their ignorance of that which invalidates much of their worship such as those things that nullify ablution or prayer and fasts. At times, some of them narrate stories pertaining to this: Such as Rabīʿa al-ʿAdawiyya ﷺ, came one night to al-Quds and performed prayer until the morning and on one side was a house in which there was a jurist who was repeating a chapter on the *Fiqh* of menstruation until the morning. In the morning, Rabīʿa said to him: "What is this? Many have reached their Lord and you are preoccupied with the menstruation of women." Or she said something like this. So, what is it that prevents those preoccupied with knowledge from gaining that which those preoccupied with worship acquire in spite of their superiority over them?

He replied: All praise is for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds. There is no doubt that he who is granted knowledge and faith is greater in rank than those who have only been bestowed

faith, as the Book and the Sunnah indicate that. Praiseworthy knowledge towards which the Book and the Sunnah indicate is that knowledge which is the inheritance of the prophets, as the Prophet ﷺ said: "Indeed, the scholars are the heirs of the prophets. Indeed the prophets do not leave inheritance in the form of *dirhams* or *dinars*, they only leave in inheritance knowledge, and so he who takes that has taken a great portion."

This knowledge is of three types: The knowledge of Allah, His names and His attributes, and that which is concerned with that. As an example of this, Allah revealed *Surah al-Ikhlāṣ*, *Āyat al-Kursī*, etc. The second is knowledge in which Allah has informed of those issues that have passed, those matters that will come and what is happening in the present. By way of example of this, Allah has revealed the verses containing stories, pledges, warnings, the descriptions of paradise and hell, etc. The third is that knowledge pertaining to what Allah has commanded from those matters related to the hearts and the limbs, namely bringing faith in Allah, the knowledge of the hearts and their spiritual conditions (*ḥāl*), the utterances of the limbs and their actions. In it is knowledge of the core matters of faith and the principles of Islam, and also knowledge relating to exoteric speech and actions; this knowledge includes in it what is found in the books of the jurists, namely the knowledge of the rulings of external actions, for indeed that is a minute part of the knowledge of faith in the way that the revelations (*kashf*) that happen to the people of purity is a minute part of the knowledge pertaining to matters of existence.

The people are only erring in these issues because they understand the denotations of the nomenclature that appear in the Book and the Sunnah yet do not understand the realities

of the issues at hand. Many a person memorizes the various forms of knowledge, the greatest of which is memorizing the Qur'ān, even though he may not understand it and not even have faith, by which he may be distinguished over he who has been given the Qur'ān and not memorized various forms of knowledge as the Prophet ﷺ said in a hadith that all have agreed on (*muttafaq ʿalayh*): "The like of a believer who reads the Qur'ān is like the citron, its taste is pleasant and its smell is pleasant. The example of a believer who does not recite the Qur'ān is like that of a date, it has no smell, though its taste is sweet. The example of a hypocrite who recites the Qur'ān is that of a sweet smelling flower, it has fragrance but has a bitter taste. The example of a hypocrite who does not read the Qur'ān is like a wild gourd. It has a bitter taste and no smell."

So, at times a man may have memorized the letters of the Qur'ān and its Sūrahs and he may not be a believer but a hypocrite; so the believer who has not memorized its letters and Surahs is better than him even though others benefit from that hypocrite in the way benefit is drawn from the sweet smelling flower. As to he who has been granted knowledge and faith, he is a knowledgeable believer; he is superior to the believer who is not equal to him in knowledge in the way they are equal in faith. This is a principle the knowing of which is imperative.

Here is another principle: Not every action which results in *kashf* or supernatural control over things (*taṣarruf*) in the world is superior than the action that does not result in *kashf* and *taṣarruf*. Indeed, if the *kashf* and *taṣarruf* are not helpful to the religion of Allah, then they are means of enjoying the worldly life. At times, they are acquired by the disbelievers from among the polytheists and the People of the Book, and

not acquired by the people of faith who are the people of Paradise, while those are the people of fire.

The excellence of actions and their higher levels are not gained through the likes of this and are only gained through the guidance of the Book and the Sunnah. It is because of this that many actions allow for the performer to gain in the world a high ranking and wealth. The most noble of the creation according to Allah are the most Allah fearing. He who worships Allah without knowledge has done more harm than good even though he has acquired *kashf* and *taṣarruf* and even though a large number of the masses follow him. We have discussed this in detail at its place, and this is the second principle.

The third principle is that the superiority of one action over another at times will be absolute, such as the superiority of the fundamental act (*aṣl*) of religion over its subsidiary act (*farʿ*), and at times [this superiority is] conditional. Hence, in respect to Zayd, one of two actions may be superior to the other, and the other may be superior in respect to ʿAmr. At times they may both be equal in respect to one man and at times that which is inferior may at times be superior than that which is [normally] superior; at times, for the person who is capable of it and would be able to benefit from it, that which is inferior will be greater than that which is superior for the person who is not of that condition.

Its example is that the recitation of the Qurʾān is superior than just mentioning the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the Consensus of the Ummah—and there is no consideration for those ignorant slaves who oppose that. Then, reciting the Qurʾān is not allowed in bowing and prostration, in those postures it is *dhikr* that is commanded. Likewise, *dhikr* and

supplication in the Ṭawāf and 'Arafa etc are superior to reading the Qur'ān. Likewise, the religiously ordained *dhikr*—such as which is said when the Call to Prayer is heard, at the time of entering and leaving the mosque and the home, when a rooster or a donkey are heard, etc.—are superior than reciting the Qur'ān at those times. The majority of the wayfarers (*sālikūn*) when they recite the Qur'ān do not understand it. They have not tasted the sweetness of faith (*īmān*) with which the Qur'ān may increase them in faith. So, when they turn to *dhikr*, the *dhikr* gives them the sweetness and taste of faith and so the *dhikr* is more beneficial for them at that moment than reciting what they do not understand. Nor do they have in faith that which increases with the recitation of the Qur'ān. When the man is given faith the Qur'ān increases him in this, something that cannot be gained just by *dhikr*. This is the third principle.

The fourth principle is that the man at times carries out a superior action without fulfilling its condition and there is no sincerity in it. So, on account of its conditions being lost he is less than the one who properly carries out an action that is less superior. These principles and their like clarify the answer of this questioner even though paper is not enough for the details of it. And Allah is the most knowledgeable.

9. Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah mentions in *Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā*, vol. 11, p. 433:

Shaykh al-Islam was asked regarding the hadith narrated about the *abdāl*—is it *Ṣaḥiḥ*[169] or *maqtūʿ*?[170] And are the *abdāl*

169— *Ṣaḥiḥ* could be defined as that Hadith which is narrated by a trustworthy and competent individual with a connected chain of narration and without a serious flaw. (IN)
170— *Maqtūʿ* could be loosely defined as that Hadith attributed to a Follower. (IN)

particularly in the Levant (al-Shām)? Or is it the case that wherever the distinct features of Islam are established with the Book and the Sunnah, the *abdāl* will be there, in the Levant and other lands? Is it correct that the *walī* may be sitting in a group and his body is absent? What do the respected scholars say regarding these names which are used to describe a group from those attributed to the faith and erudition, they say this is a *ghawth al-aghwāth*, this is a *quṭub al-aqṭāb*, this is the *quṭub al-ʿālam*, this is *al-quṭub al-kabīr*, and this is *khātam al-awliyā'* (the seal of the *awliyā'*)?

He responded: As to the names that are prevalent on the tongues of many of the ascetics and the lay masses such as the *ghawth* (helper) who is in Makkah, the forty *awtād* (pegs), the seven *aqṭāb* (pivots), the forty *abdāl* (substitutes), the three hundred *nujabā* (deputies), these names are not present in the Book of Allah Most High and nor are they also narrated from the Prophet ﷺ with a *Ṣaḥiḥ* chain of narration, nor does the weak hadiths (*ḍaʿīf*) contain the word *abdāl.*

They have been narrated in the hadith of the Levant (Hadith Shāmī) which is *munqatiʿ*[171] in its chain of narration from ʿAlī ibn Abū Ṭālib ﷺ who attributes (*marfūʿ*) it to the Prophet ﷺ that he said: "Indeed, among them—meaning the people of the Levant—there are *abdāl*, forty men. Whenever a man dies Allah Most High will replace him with another man in his place." These names are not found in the speech of the predecessors as they are in this order, nor are they narrated according to this order and meanings from the shaykhs who are accepted widely by the Ummah. These descriptions are only found from some of

171— *Munqatiʿ* is that Hadith whose chain is broken. (IN)

those followers of the shaykhs, and they only said this to give them preference over others or as a reminder.

This and knowledge similar to it has become, for many of those of the latter times, obscured with that which is wrong. Hence, in it there is truth which has to be accepted and falsehood that needs to be rejected. Many of the people are in opposition on both sides. There is a group that has falsified everything in it because they found some falsehood in it. There is a group that has verified as the truth everything in it because they found some truth in it. The correct is only to verify what is the truth and falsify the falsehood…

As to the word *al-ghawth* and *al-ghiyāth*, only Allah is in need of it for He is the Aider of all who seek His help (*ghiyāth al-mustaghīthīn*) and it is impermissible for anyone to seek aid from anyone aside from Him, not even a close angel and or a sent prophet…

As to the *awtād*, it is at times found in the speech of some that they say: Such a person is from the *awtād*. Meaning that Allah Most High has, by him, established faith and the religion in the hearts of those whom Allah guided by him in the way He establishes the earth with its *awtād* (mountains). This meaning is established for everyone who has this quality from the scholars; therefore, each person on account of whom knowledge and faith has been established in the majority of people is on the standing of a great peg and a large mountain; he who is of a less ranking view him as such. That is not confined to four, or less or more, rather they have considered them four by comparing with the opinion of astrologers regarding the earth's pegs.

As to the *quṭub*, it is also found in their speech that such a person is from among the *aqṭāb* (plural of *quṭub*) or that such a person is a *quṭub*. Hence, each person around whom revolves an issue pertaining to religion or the world, exoterically or esoterically, is a *quṭub* of that matter and its pivot. This is regardless of whether that which revolves around him is the affair of his home, his street, his village or his city, or relates to the matter of his religion and worldly life, esoterically or exoterically. There is no specifying of this meaning into seven, or any less or more. However, what is praised in relation to this is the person who is the pivot for the improvement of both worldly and religious matters, not just the improvement of religious matters—he is a *quṭub* in their terminology. Hence, in some eras there is agreement that a man is the most superior of the people of his era. At times, there is agreement in another era that two or three are equal in excellence according to Allah. It is not necessary that there is in an era one individual who is unconditionally the most superior of the creation according to Allah…

Those who have spoken regarding the name *badl* (pl. *abdāl*) explain it through several meanings. Among them is that they are the replacement (*badl*) of the prophets, and among those meanings is that each time a man from among them dies, Allah Most High replaces in his place with another man. Among those meanings is that they have replaced the bad qualities of their manners and actions and beliefs with good qualities. These ascriptions, all of them, are not specific to forty, nor to less or more. Nor are they confined to the people of one land on earth. And by this the meaning of the word *nujabāʾ* also becomes apparent…

And, among the Allah fearing *awliyā'* of Allah, the sincere and pious slaves of Allah, and His Prophets that have been sent, there is no one who is constantly absent in body from the sight of people, rather this is from the category of the speech of those who say that indeed ʿAlī is in the clouds, Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyya is in Mount Radwa [near Yanbu], that Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan is in a cellar (*sardāb*) in [the city of] Samarra, al-Ḥākim is in the mountains of Egypt, and that the forty *abdāl* are unseen men in the mountains of Lebanon. All of this and its like are from the speech of the people of falsehood and lies. Yes, it is the case that something contrary to the habit takes place relating to an individual who may at times disappear from the people's sight either to repel an enemy from himself or for another reason. As for him to remain like this his entire life, then this is falsehood. Yes, the radiance of his heart, the guidance of his mind and what is in there, namely the secrets of Allah Most High, His trust, light and knowledge (*maʿrifa*) is hidden from the eyes of people. His piety and nearness to Allah (*wilāya*) is hidden from most people and this is actually the case. The secrets of Allah are between Him and His *awliyā'*, the majority of people do not know.

10. *Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah*, vol. 10, p. 5:

In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful. All praise is for Allah alone, and peace and blessing on he after whom there is no prophet. All praise is for Allah, we seek His aid, we seek His forgiveness, and we seek refuge in Allah from the evil of our selves and the wickedness of

our actions. He whom Allah guides, there is none who can mislead, and he whom He misleads there is none who can guide. We testify that there is no deity save Allah alone, He has no partners, and we testify that Muḥammad is His slave and His messenger, may Allah bless him and his followers and grant peace.

Proceeding thereafter: these are a few sentences regarding the actions of hearts which are called Stations (*maqām*) and Spiritual States (*aḥwāl*), and they are from the conditions of faith and the principles of the religion such as love of Allah and His messenger, relying on Allah, sincerity in religion, thanking Him, bearing patience on His judgment, fearing Him, and entertaining hope in Him and that which follows that.

Some of those from the people of faith whose right Allah has made incumbent [on me,] insisted for this to be written. All of us were eager [to have it written]. Hence, I say that all of these actions are necessary on the entire creation, those who are fundamentally commanded, through the agreement of the Imāms of religion.

People, in relation to the state of the hearts, are of three levels as they are of three levels in relation to the actions of the body: a tyrant over himself (*ẓālim li nafsihi*), moderate (*muqtaṣid*) and the one who hastens in good actions (*sābiq bi'l-khayrāt*). The *ẓālim* is the one who is disobedient by abandoning that which has been commanded or doing that which has been warned against; the *muqtaṣid* is he who fulfils the incumbent actions and leaves that which is forbidden; and the *sābiq* is he who draws close through those actions which he is able to perform such as the incumbent and recommended actions and

by abandoning that which is forbidden and disliked. This is the situation even if the *muqtaṣid* and the *sābiq* may at times have sins which are erased through repentance—*"Surely Allah loves those who are most repenting, and loves those who keep themselves pure"* (2:222)—or through actions that erase sins or difficulties that annul sins or something else.

Both of the two types—the *muqtaṣid* and the *sābiq*—are from the friends of Allah whom He has mentioned in His Book: *"Listen, the friends of Allah shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve—those who have believed and have been fearful of Allah."* (10:62-63) The boundary of the friends (*awliyā'*) of Allah is those believers who are fearful of Allah (*muttaqī*). However, that is divided into types: the general [*awliyā'*] and they are those who are *muqtaṣid* and the special [*awliyā'*] and they are the *sābiq*. The *sābiq* are of greater rank such as the prophets and the *ṣiddīqūn*.

The Prophet ﷺ has mentioned both types in a hadith which al-Bukhari has narrated in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* from Abū Hurayrah ﷺ from the Prophet ﷺ that he said, "Allah said, 'Whoever has enmity for a *walī* of Mine, then he has declared war on Me. My slave does not draw close to Me with anything more beloved to Me than the duties I have obligated upon him. My servant continues to draw near to Me with supererogatory deeds until I love him. When I love him, I become his hearing with which he hears, his sight with which he sees and his hand with which he touches and his leg with which he walks. With Me he hears, with Me he sees, with Me he touches and with Me he walks. If he were to ask Me then I will definitely give him and if he were to seek My refuge then I will surely give him refuge. I

do not hesitate to do something I am going to do such as My hesitation from taking the life of My believing slave; he dislikes death and I dislike hurting him yet that is necessary for him.'"

As to the *ẓālim* from the people of faith, he has that level of *wilāya* (closeness to Allah) that is commensurate to his faith and his fearing of Allah (*taqwā*); this is just like his situation on the contrary according to his level of unrighteousness. This is because at times righteousness that elicits reward and unrighteousness that elicits punishment can gather in a single person to an extent that it is possible he is rewarded and punished. This is the saying of all of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and the Imāms of Islam and the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿa who say that surely he who has in his heart a minute particle of faith shall not remain in the fire forever...

These esoteric actions, such as love for Allah, being sincere to Him, relying on Him (*tawakkul*), being pleased with Him, etc. are all commanded in respect to the elite and common folk, abandoning them is not praiseworthy in respect to anyone, even if his standing were to increase...

However, people are divided in relation to these Stations into the elite and the common people—the elite have a special station and the common people have a common station. Its example is that the common people say that surely *tawakkul* is struggling with one's *nafs* in search of sustenance, whereas the elite do not defend the *nafs* [in search of sustenance]. They say that the one doing *tawakkul* seeks by way of it many things, whereas the knower of Allah (*ʿārif*) sees these matters from their peripherals and does not seek anything. Hence, it is said that the first [category] is wider than the *tawakkul* carried out

in relation to the interests of the world, for the person doing *tawakkul* relies on Allah in rectifying his heart and faith, and safeguarding his tongue and intentions, and these are the most important matters for him. It is because of this that he intimately converses with his Lord in every prayer by His saying, *"It is only You that we worship and it is only You from Who we seek help,"* (1:5) and, *"So worship Him and have trust in Him,"* (11:123) and His saying, *"In Him alone I have placed my trust and to Him alone I turn in humbleness,"* (11:88 and 42:10) and His saying, *"Say, He is my Lord, there is no deity save He; in Him do I place my trust and to Him is my return."* (13:30)

Worship and trust in Allah have been mentioned together in various places because they comprise the faith in its entirety and it is because of this that some from the predecessors said: Surely Allah has gathered all of the revealed books in the Qur'ān and has gathered the knowledge of the Qur'ān in the *al-Mufaṣṣal*[172] and he has gathered the knowledge of the *al-Mufaṣṣal* in *al-Fātiḥa* and he has gathered the knowledge of *al-Fātiḥa* in His saying, *"It is only You that we worship and it is only You from Who we seek help."* (1:5)

11. *Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah*, vol. 10, p. 82:

Those shaykhs who wrote regarding the Sunnah mention in their beliefs remaining aloof from those who often claim love and indulge in that without fear; this is because in this is

172— The *al-Mufaṣṣal* are the short *surahs* of the Qur'ān which have many breaks in between them. *Mufaṣṣal* means divided. There is a difference of view among the *'ulamā'* as to where they begin. Some say they begin at *Surah Qāf* until the end of the Qur'ān whereas others say they begin at *Surah al-Ḥujurāt*. (IN)

corruption into which a group of the Sufis (*mutaṣawwifa*) fell into. The corruption in beliefs and actions that they fell into necessitated a group totally rejecting the basis of the way of the Sufis until those who are in error became two: a group that affirmed what is correct and false in it, and a group that rejected what is correct and false in it similar to the groups of people of *Kalam* and *Fiqh*.[173] What is only correct is affirming in it and in other matters that which agrees with the Book and the Sunnah, and rejecting that which is in it and in other matters aside from it which is contrary to the Book and the Sunnah.

12. *Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah*, vol. 10, p. 337:

The annihilation (*fanāʾ*) found in the speech of the Sufis is explained in three ways. The first is annihilation in the heart from intending anything aside from the Lord, and to have trust in Him (*tawakkul*), worship Him and perform that which comes with that. This is the correct truth, pure monotheism and sincerity. This in reality is the worship of the heart and its placing trust in, seeking aid in, devoting to, returning to and turning to Allah Who is One and has no partner and that which comes with that, namely knowledge of Allah (*maʿrifa*) and spiritual states (*aḥwāl*). It is not for anyone to depart from this.

This is the sound heart regarding which Allah has said, *"Save he who comes with a sound heart."* (26:89) This is the heart that is safe from corrupt beliefs, corrupt intentions and that which comes with that. This annihilation is not contradictory to

173— This is also regretfully the case with a group of the Salafis who attribute themselves to Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah.

abiding in Allah (*baqā'*), rather it and *baqā'* gather together and so the slave is annihilated from intending anything apart from Him even though he is aware of Allah and that aside from Him. Its explanation is the saying of *Lā ilāha illā Allah*. The Prophet ﷺ used to say, "There is no deity save Allah, we do not worship [anything] except Him, for Him is bounty, excellence and praiseworthiness." That, in sum, is religion from beginning to end.

The second is the annihilation of the heart from seeing anything aside from the Lord. The first was annihilation from intending [anything apart from Allah] and this is annihilation from witnessing. The first was annihilation from worshiping something aside from Him and having trust in Him, and this is annihilation of knowledge of anything aside from Him and to look [only] at Him. In this annihilation there is a deficiency since witnessing realities as they are, which is witnessing the Lord Who is managing the affairs of His slave and commanding His Sacred Law, is more perfect than witnessing His existence, or a quality from His many qualities, or a name from His many names; annihilation through this [second type] would be annihilation from witnessing all aside from that.

It is because of this that the Companions were the most complete in witnessing, not that witnessing the Truth (Allah) in a holistic (*mujmal*) fashion would leave them short of seeing Him in a detailed (*mufaṣṣal*) fashion. However, much of this occurred to many of those of the latter times of this Ummah in the way death, unconsciousness, screaming and convulsion occurred to them. That is because of a heart that is weak in witnessing the realities as they are, witnessing dispersion in

unity (*jamʿ*) and multitude in one until they differed in the possibility of that. Many of them are of the view that anything aside from that is not possible because they are of the view that when the creation or a matter is mentioned then they have become preoccupied from the Creator and Commander. When an example of the Prophet ﷺ and his Caliphs is presented they claim this was specific [to them], refuse to answer or express surprise at the issue.

The reason for this is that he has estimated all of the creation according to that on which he found himself and it is because of this that some of them said: Indeed, when the Truth (Allah) manifests it is not possible to hear His speech…

It is in this form of annihilation that he at times says: "I am the truth (*anā'l-ḥaqq*)," "glory to me (*subḥānī*)," or "there is none in this *jubba* save Allah." This is because he is annihilated by that which he has seen from witnessing Him, by that which he has found from finding Him, by that which is mentioned from His mention, and by that which he has recognized from recognizing Him (*maʿrifa*). This is like the man who was drowned in the love of another. The beloved fell into the sea and so the other threw himself behind him. So the first said, "What made you throw yourself behind me?" He responded, "You became absent with yourself from me and I then thought that you were me."

In stations like this, intoxication (*sukur*) happens which cancels the faculty of discernment (*tamyīz*) with the existence of the sweetness of faith as is obtained through the intoxication of wine and the intoxication experienced by the lover of images. Likewise, annihilation is acquired through the condition of fear

or hope in the way it is acquired through the condition of love, and so the heart becomes absent from witnessing some realities. Speech or action similar to the actions of those intoxicated appear from him, these are the ecstatic utterances (*shaṭaḥāt*) of some of the shaykhs such as the saying of some of them, "Set my tent up over Jahannam," and other similar words and actions that are contrary to the Sharīʿa. At times, the person uttering them is not sinful.

13. *Majmūʿ al-Fatāwā Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah*, vol. 11, p. 510:

As to the wearing of the cloak (*khirqa*) which some of the shaykhs clothe the *murīdūn*, then this is not something which has a basis on which there is reliable proof from the Book and the Sunnah, nor did the early shaykhs and majority of the later ones clothe their *murīdūn*. However, a group of the latter ones saw that and considered it preferable.

Some of them have derived proof that the Prophet ﷺ clothed the mother of Khālid ibn Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀs and told her, *sanā*. Sanā in the language of Abyssinia means good. She had been born in Abyssinia and that is why he addressed her in this tongue.

They have also derived proof from the hadith of the cloak (*burda*) which a woman weaved for the Prophet ﷺ and one of the Companions asked him regarding it and he granted it to him. He responded, "I wanted it to be my shroud."

In these two hadiths there is no proof for that which they do; for a man to grant another that which he wears is like granting him that which benefits him. His taking clothes from

the Prophet ﷺ is by way of *baraka* like taking his hair by way of *baraka*, and that is not like the wearing of clothes or a hat by way of following and emulation. However, it is similar in some ways with the kings taking off garments and bestowing them on those whom they appoint as governors as if it is a hallmark and sign of governorship and nobility.

Because of this, they call it a bestowing of honors. The goal of this and its like is from the genre of that which is permissible. If a pious intention is adjoined to it then it is good from that perspective. As to making it a Sunnah and a way to Allah Most High, then the matter is not as such.

As to a group being attributed to a particular shaykh, then there is no doubt that people are in need of he from whom they can obtain faith and the Qur'ān in the way that the Companions obtained them from the Prophet ﷺ and the Followers who obtained from them. By this, following the way of the first to accept Islam in goodness (*al-sābiq al-awwal*) is achieved. In the way a man has he who teaches him the Qur'ān and its like, likewise he has that person who teaches him the esoteric and exoteric religion.

14. *Majmū' al-Fatāwā Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah*, vol. 11, p. 497:

Chapter:

As to what they mention regarding their excessiveness in relation to the shaykhs, it is necessary to know that the pious shaykhs that they follow in the religion follow the way of the Prophets and Messengers like the first to accept Islam from

the Migrants (Muhājirīn) and Helpers (Anṣār) and those who followed them in goodness and those who in the Ummah have a truthful tongue.

The way of these people is to call the creation to Allah, His obedience, the obedience of His Prophet, following His Book and the Sunnah of His Prophet ﷺ.

The purpose is that the religion in its entirety is for Allah and the word of Allah remains lofty for indeed Allah Most High says, *"I did not create the jinns and the human beings except for the purpose that they should worship Me. I do not want any sustenance from them, nor do I want them to feed Me. Surely, Allah is the All-Sustainer, Possessor of power, the Strong."* (51:56-58) ...*"And when My slaves call unto Me, then I am close, I answer the call of the caller when he calls Me."* (2:186) It is narrated from some of the Companions who said, "Oh Messenger of Allah, is our Lord close so we may whisper to Him or far so we call out to Him?" Allah Most High then revealed this verse.

He Most High is All Hearing, Close, the Answerer and Most Compassionate. He is more compassionate with His slaves than a mother with her child. He knows the condition of slaves that others do not know and is able to fulfil their needs that others are unable to do. He has such mercy for them that others cannot have that much mercy.

The shaykhs who lead them, guide to Him and instruct towards Him in the way Imāms do so in Salah; they pray and people pray behind them like the guide who brings the pilgrims to the House. The guide and the shaykhs all head towards Him; they have no divinity. In fact, whoever attributes any of that to them then he is like the Christians and those who ascribe partners.

15. He also mentions in the book *Al-Istiqāma* published by Imām Muḥammad ibn Saʿūd Islamic University at its own cost) in 1403 AH. Part 1, p. 81:

Chapter:

In that which Shaykh Abu'l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī has mentioned in his famous book regarding the *ʿaqīda* of the Sufi shaykhs, he has mentioned their various anecdotes with which it is proved that they were in agreement with the beliefs of many of the Ashʿarī scholars of beliefs (*Kalam*). That was the belief of Abu'l-Qāsim who acquired that from Abū Bakr ibn Fūrak and Abū Isḥāq al-Asfarāyīnī. The majority of this belief was in agreement with the principles of the Salaf and the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāʿa. However, it was deficient in that and included the abandoning of some of that which they were on, and an increase in opposing that which they were on.

What is established and correct from the senior shaykhs is in agreement to that on which the Salaf were, and this is that which it is necessary to mention. For indeed what is correct, explicit and preserved from the senior shaykhs, such as Fuḍayl ibn ʿAyad, Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī, Yūsuf ibn Asbāṭ, Hudhayfa al-Marʿashī, Maʿrūf al-Karkhī until Junayd ibn Muḥammad, Sahl ibn ʿAbdullah al-Tustarī and their like clarifies the reality of the writings of the shaykhs.

Several have gathered the writings of the shaykhs verbatim or as they understood them. Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq al-Kalābādhī wrote the book *Al-Taʿarruf li Madhāhib al-Taṣawwuf* which is the most excellent of that which Abu'l-Qāsim has mentioned, the most correct and closest to the *madhhab* of the

predecessors of the Ummah, its Imāms and its senior shaykhs. Likewise, Muʿammar ibn Ziyād al-Asfahānī, the shaykh of the Sufis, and Abū ʿAbdur Raḥmān Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Sulamī compiled the speech of the Sufis. They were in that of a lofty level and far from innovation (*biḍʿa*) and desires (*hawā*) than Abu'l-Qāsim.

Abū ʿAbdur Raḥmān—even though he was lesser of the two men—would object to the way of the al-Kulābiyya and would consider them to be innovators. That was the way that Abu'l-Qāsim supported. He (Abū ʿAbdur Raḥmān) has a book criticizing *Kalam* and opposing that which Abu'l-Qāsim supported. Abū ʿAbdur Raḥmān was the greatest of those from who Abu'l-Qāsim took the speech of the shaykhs and he relies on him in the majority of that which he narrates for indeed he has several books.

Likewise, it is not known regarding the majority of the shaykhs who Abū 'l-Qāsim mentions in his *Al-Risāla* [*al-Qushayriyya*] that any of their shaykhs supported the way of the al-Kulābiyya and the al-Ashariyya which Abu'l-Qāsim supported, rather the contrary is narrated regarding them. Whoever has been explicit from among them, then he has been explicit in their opposition, this is also the case with the shaykhs of his era who he names: "As to the shaykhs who were our contemporaries and who we saw—even though we did not have the opportunity to meet them—such as the *ustādh*, the martyr, he who was most eloquent and unique in his era Abū ʿAlī al-Daqqāq, the shaykh of his era Shaykh Abū ʿAbdur Raḥmān al-Sulamī, Abu'l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Jahḍam who dwelled in the Haram (*mujāwir al-ḥaram*), Shaykh Abu'l-ʿAbbās

al-Qaṣṣāb in Tabaristan, Aḥmad al-Aswad al-Daynwarī, Abu'l-Qāsim al-Ṣayrafī in Nishapur, Abū Sahl al-Khashshāb who was a great man there, Manṣūr ibn Khalaf al-Maghribī, Abū Saʿīd al-Mālīnī, Abū Ṭāhir al-Jaḥdarī—may Allah sanctify their souls—and others."

Indeed, these shaykhs, such as Abu'l-ʿAbbās al-Qaṣṣāb, had many famous books regarding the Sunnah and opposing the way of the Ashʿarī Kulābiyya which is not the subject here.

Likewise, the majority of the shaykhs of the Muslims from the earlier and latter times who are the voices of truth in the Ummah such as Shaykh Yaḥyā ibn Yūsuf al-Ṣarṣarī mentioned and composed in his poetry from Shaykh ʿAlī ibn Idrīs who was his shaykh that he asked Quṭub al-ʿĀrifin (pole of the knowers of Allah) Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdul Qādir ibn ʿAbdullah al-Jīlī.[174] He said, "Oh my master, can there be a *walī* of Allah who is not on the belief of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal?" He responded, "It has never been and shall never be."

Likewise, Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar ibn Muḥammad al-Suhrawardī narrated; Shaykh ʿIzz al-Dīn ʿAbdullah ibn Aḥmad ʿUmar al-Fārūqī heard this story from him and I also found it hanging [on a wall] in the handwriting of Shaykh Muwaffaq al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad ibn Qudāma al-Maqdisī. Al-Suhrawardī said, "I had decided to read some knowledge of *Kalam* and I was hesitant whether I should read *Al-Irshād* by Imām al-Ḥaramayn or *Nihāya al-Iqdām* by Shahristānī or his shaykh's book. I went with my maternal

174—This is Abū Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn ʿAbdul Qādir ibn Mūsā ibn ʿAbdullah ibn Janki Dost al-Ḥasanī al-Jīlānī, or al-Kīlānī or al-Jīlī, the shaykh of the Qādri Sufis who was from among the major ascetics and Sufis. (IN)

uncle Abu'l-Najīb and he used to perform Salah next to Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir." He says, "Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir turned to me and said, 'Oh ʿUmar, what is the provision of the grave? What is the provision of the grave?' I then recanted from that idea." He informed that it was revealed (*kashf*) to the shaykh what was in his heart and forbade him from *Kalam* to which al-Qushayrī and his like affiliated themselves to.

Likewise, Shaykh Abu'l-Ḥasan ibn Ghānim narrated to me that he heard his maternal uncle Shaykh Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAbdullah al-Armawī that he had a teacher who he used to recite to and that he recited to him the beliefs of the latter Ashʿariyya. He said, "I used to go to him and my father and Shaykh ʿAbdullah al-Armīnī[175] heard." He said, "My father said, 'What is this oh Ibrāhīm?' I said that the teacher taught this. He said, 'Oh Ibrāhīm, leave this. I have travelled the earth and met with this and this *walī* of Allah. I did not find any of them on this belief. I only found them on the beliefs of these.' He then pointed to his neighbours, the people of hadith and Sunnah from the pious people of Bayt al-Muqaddas (*maqādisa*) who were there.[176]

Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Abū Bakr ibn Qawwām also narrated to me that he heard his grandfather Shaykh Abū Bakr ibn Qawwām say that when it reaches you regarding the people of such a place, and Shaykh Muḥammad named them to me, when it reaches you that among them is a believing man (*mu'min*) or pious man, then accept that as the truth. And

175— Most likely of Armenian descent as his *nisba* indicates. (IN)

176— There was a group of Ḥanbalīs who had taken refuge from the Crusaders in other parts of the Levant, including Damascus, and were often called the *maqādisa* (plural of *maqdisi)* because of their origins from Bayt al-Muqaddas and its surrounding areas and cities. (IN)

when it reaches you that in them is a *walī* of Allah, then do not believe. I said, "Why not oh my master?" He said, "Because they are Ashʿarī." That is a lengthy chapter.

Whoever looks at the beliefs of the famous shaykhs, such as Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir, Shaykh ʿAdī ibn Mūsāfir, Shaykh Abū al-Bayān al-Dimashqī and others, then he would find that a lot. He will also find that he who goes towards the *madhhab* of the people of *Kalam*, even if he interprets it allegorically, then there is in it a deficiency and turning away from the rank of the perfect *awliyā'* of Allah; he will also find that he who is deficient in the knowledge of the beliefs of the Ahl al-Sunnah and its followers and admirers, and [is deficient in the] dislike of that which is contrary to that and rebuking that, in terms of being empty of the knowledge of perfect Sunah and the belief of *bidʿa*, then you shall find him deficient from the rank of the *awliyā'* of Allah who are firm in the knowledge of the beliefs of the Ahl al-Sunnah and its followers. *"Allah has set a measure for everything."* (65:3)

That which Abu'l-Qāsim has mentioned in his *Al-Risāla* [*al-Qushayriyya*] in terms of their beliefs, manners and way, in it there is much goodness, truth and religion. However, in there is a deficiency from the way of the majority of the perfect *awliyā'* of Allah, and they are the choicest individuals of the three generations and those who treaded their path. He has not mentioned in his book the Imāms of the shaykhs from the three generations. In addition to what is in his book in terms of beneficial information in terms of anecdotes and narrated matters, there are also in it hadiths, weak hadiths and those that are false. In it are ambiguous words that have true and

false meanings in terms of both narration and opinion. *"Allah has set a measure for everything."* (65:3)

Allah Most High said, *"Be upholders of justice, witnesses for Allah, even though against youtselves or parents and relatives. One may be wealthy or poor but Allah is the better caretaker of both. So do not follow desires, lest you should swerve. If you twist or avoid (the evidence), then Allah is all aware of what you do."* (4:135)

I have written in distinguishing that which Allah has made easy and I have strived in following the path of the moderate Ummah who are witnesses over the people, not the path of those who raise the Ummah above its worth in its beliefs and Taṣawwuf, but the path which is most perfect and correct which has been mentioned in terms of knowledge, situation, speech, action, beliefs and justice; nor the path of those who lowered it below its worth in terms of beliefs and Taṣawwuf from those who exceed the limit in criticizing the people of Kalam or criticizing the way of Taṣawwuf in absolute terms. Allah is most knowledge.

16. He also mentions in the book *Al-Istiqāma*. Part 1. Page 94:

Abu'l-Qāsim has mentioned in the biography of Shaykh Abū ʿAlī ibn al-Kātib, and he had remained in the company of Abū ʿAlī al-Rūdhbārī and others, and he was alive after 340 AH—he said, "The Mutazalites considered Allah free from faults (*tanzīh*) from the perspective of intellect and erred, whereas the Sufis did His *tanzīh* from the perspective of knowledge and were correct."

I say: Sharīʿa is what is mainly meant by the word *ʿilm* found in the speech of the Sufis and their many advices such as

Abū Yaʿqub al-Nahrajūrī, "The best of spiritual conditions is that which is adjoined to knowledge." This is like the words of Abū Yazīd, "I struggled with the self (*mujāhada*) for thirty years and I found nothing more difficult on me than knowledge and following it. If it were not for the differences of the *ʿulamā'* I would have remained behind. The differences of the *ʿulamā'* is a source of mercy except in stripping bare divine unity (*tajrīd al-tawḥīd*)."

This is like the saying of Sahl ibn ʿAbdullah al-Tustarī: "Every action that you do without following guidance, regardless of whether it is an act of obedience or disobedience, then this is living according to the carnal self. And each action that you do with guidance, then it is punishment on the carnal self."

Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī said, "Some days, a point from the issues of the people occurs in my heart and I do not accept it except with two just witnesses: the Book and the Sunnah."

His companion Aḥmad ibn Abu'l-Ḥuwārī said, "He who acts without following the Sunnah, then his action is redundant."

Abū Ḥafṣ al-Nīsāpūrī said, "He who does not weigh his actions and speech all the time with the Book and the Sunnah, and does not hold in suspicion his thoughts, then do not count him in the register of men."

Junayd ibn Muḥammad said, "All of the paths are closed to the creation except he who follows in the steps of the Prophet ﷺ."

He also said, "He who has not preserved the Qur'ān and written hadith, he should not be followed in this matter because our knowledge is confined to the Book and the Sunnah."

Abū ʿUthmān said, "He who appoints the Sunnah on his self as leader in speech and action, he shall speak with wisdom,

whereas he who appoints desires over his self as leader in speech and action, then he shall speak of innovation. Allah Most High says, *'If you obey him then you shall be guided.'"* (25:54) Abū Ḥamza al-Baghdādī said, "He who has learned the path to Allah, his journey shall be made easy for him, and there is no guide for the path to Allah except following the Prophet in his conditions, speech and actions."

He who spoke of knowledge in their speech was Abū ʿUthmān al-Nīsābūrī, "Association with Allah should be carried out with excellent etiquettes (*ḥusn al-adab*) and uninterrupted reverence and thought; association with the Prophet ﷺ should be carried out by following his Sunnah and adhering to the exoteric (outward) aspects of knowledge; association with the *awliyā'* of Allah should be carried out with respect and service; association with family should be carried out with good manners (*ḥusn al-khuluq*); association with friends should be with perpetual joy as long as there is no sin; and association with the ignorant (*juhhāl*) should be with *duʿā'* for mercy for them."

Abu'l-Ḥusayn al-Nūrī said, "Do not venture near he whom you see claiming to be associated with Allah Most High while leaving the limits of Sharʿī knowledge."

He also said, "The most beloved of things in our age are two: a scholar who acts on his knowledge and a knower of Allah who speaks regarding His reality."

... Abū ʿAbdur Raḥmān al-Sulamī said, "I heard my grandfather Abū ʿAmr ibn Nujayd say, 'Every spiritual condition (*ḥāl*) that is not an outcome of knowledge, its harm is greater on the individual than its benefit.' He was asked regarding Taṣawwuf, he said, 'Patience when commanding the good and forbidding the evil.'"

The reason why they have described Sharīʿa as knowledge (*ʿilm*) is because the community are people of purpose, intention, action and spiritual states. This is their speciality. However, at times one of them acts without Sharīʿa knowledge but with that which he feels and the intention of which he finds in his heart, even though it is not legislated and commanded. This is something that many of them are embroiled in due to their preferring their knowledge of spiritual tastes (*dhawq*) and ecstasy (*wajd*) over the requirements of knowledge that is legislated and their acting on spiritual tastes for which there is no legislated knowledge.

There is no doubt that this is following the desires without guidance from Allah. This is that which Allah has rebuked the Christians with whom the erring Sufis and worshippers have similarities in many matters, it is because of this that Sahl made it from the destiny of the carnal self. Because of this Abū Yazīd became weak in following knowledge for indeed struggling against the whims of the carnal self is carried out by the majority of souls such as the worship of the polytheists, the monks from the People of the Book, the worshippers of idols and their like. All of that is from this. They carry out such asceticism and struggle (*mujāhada*) in worship that is not carried out by Muslims. However, that is false and not legislated and because of this their actions do not elicit an outcome save that which they so deserve.

The sincere Muslim, when he worships Allah in that which has been legislated, Allah opens up to him the lights of guidance in a short time. The guided ones from among the shaykhs of the worshippers and ascetics advise following legislated knowledge

in the way the people of steadfastness in knowledge advise following their knowledge which the people of steadfastness from the worshippers and the ascetics tread. As to those who have strayed from the two groups, they reject what is legislated: either in terms of knowledge or actions, both of which is the way of those who have attracted [Allah's] anger and the deviant.

Sufyān ibn ʿUyayana said, "They used to say, 'He who has become corrupt from the ʿ*ulamā*' has a likeness with the Jews, and he who is corrupt from the worshippers has a likeness with the Christians.'"

As a result, Abu'l-Qāsim intended to refute them in *Al-Risāla* [*al-Qushayriyya*]. When he mentioned the shaykhs who mentioned them, he wrote, "This is the mention of a group of the shaykhs of this circle. The purpose of mentioning them at this point is to caution that they were in consensus on venerating the Sharīʿa, adorned with treading the path of spiritual struggle, in agreement on following the Sunnah, not void of any of the etiquettes of religiousness, agreed that he who is void of [correct] dealings and spiritual struggle and has not established his situation on the foundation of piety and fear of Allah (*taqwā*) is devising a lie against Allah Most High in that which he claims, such an individual is deviated from the right path, destroyed in his self and a cause of destruction for those who have been enamored by him from those who have been inclined to his falsehood."

When the meaning of the word knowledge in their terminology is known, then [we can understand] the saying of Abū ʿAlī ibn al-Kātib that "the Sufis declared Him free from impurity and imperfection (*tanzīh*) in terms of knowledge,"

in other words from the perspective of Sharīʿa which is the Book and the Sunnah; they declared Allah free from that which He made Himself free from. They were correct in this. As to the Mutazalites, they did His *tanzīh* through the analogy of their intellects and whims. They intended to negate from Him all of the attributes that are present due to their assumption that this is anthropomorphism (*tashbīh*). They were not guided to understand that the Creator is described with that which befits Him and that the creation is described with that which befits it, and that attributing the name, even though it is agreed on, to Allah makes it special and confines it to that from which the likeness of the creation is negated.

That which Shaykh Abū ʿAlī has regarding the Sufis' opposition to the Mutazilites is an issue on which there is agreement for indeed the principles of the Sufis do not agree with negating the attributes of Allah (*ṣifāt*), rather they are the most distant of people from Iʿtizāl in *ṣifāt* and destiny (*qadr*).

17. He also mentions in the book *Al-Istiqāma*. Part 1, page 144:

Abu'l-Qāsim mentioned without a chain (*isnād*) from Junayd that he said, "Indeed, the first thing that the slave is in need of in terms of correct belief is that the creation should know his Creator and how the temporal (*muḥdath*) came into existence; by this he will recognize the attributes of the Creator from the created and that which is eternal from that which is temporary. He will humble himself to His call and admit the necessity of obeying Him for indeed he who has not recognised that which is for Allah, has not admitted the kingdom for He who deserves it."

This excellent speech is appropriate for Junayd; this speech includes differentiating between the created and the Creator so that the *sālik* does not fall into unification (*ittiḥād*) and incarnationism (*ḥulūl*) as many groups have. He has mentioned two principles: firm belief and submission, because *īmān* is speech and actions; he mentioned knowing the Creator, humbling to His call and admitting the necessity of obeying Him.

This is from the principles of the Ahl al-Sunnah and the Imāms of the shaykhs, especially the Sufi shaykhs, for indeed the basis of their way is intention—which is the basis of action. They are, in intention, worship, actions and manners, the most grounded among them in speech and knowledge, and in respect to that they are the most diligent and most focused. Indeed, he who has not entered into that [degree of intention, worship, etc.] is not from the people of tariq in any way.

18. He also mentions in the book *Al-Istiqāma*. Part 1, page. 163:

The Sufis, among them are the correct and the incorrect—as are found in those aside from them. They are not in this greater than the Companions and the Followers, and no one is infallible in everything that he says except the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

19. He also mentions in the book *Al-Istiqāma*, Part 1, page 212:

This issue, i.e. the issue of the definition of words—all of the Muslim groups have disapproved of it, even the *fuqahā'* and scholars of *Fiqh* principles (*uṣūl*). The writers on the principles

of *Fiqh* are on the *madhhab* of Abū Hanifah, Mālik, Shafi'ī and Aḥmad; they mention words and its types such as the imperative (*amr*), the negative command (*nahy*), the predicate (*khabar*) and that which is general and particular. They say that these forms fall under the word *kalam* according to all of the groups of the Ummah—its scholars of *uṣūl*, jurists, hadith scholars and Sufis[177]—except these people. So, how can this statement be attributed to the scholars of *uṣūl* in a general and particular fashion?

20. He also mentions in the book *Al-Istiqāma*. Part 1, p. 221:

Because of this, you find dislike between the *fuqahā'* and the Sufis, and between the *'ulamā'* and the *fuqarā'* in this way. What is correct is that all of those communities are praised whose condition is that which Allah and His Messenger praised as mentioned in the Book and the Sunnah, and that all of those communities are blameworthy whose condition is that which Allah and His Messenger has disapproved of as mentioned in the Book and the Sunnah. The Muslim should strive in realizing His words, *"Guide us to the straight path, the path of those You have favored, not of those who earn Your anger nor of those who go astray."* (1:6-7) The Prophet ﷺ said, "The Jews are the ones who earned anger and the Christians are those went astray."

177—Note how he considers the Sufis a group from the various groups within the Ummah of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ such as the Hadith scholars, the jurists and the scholars of *uṣūl*. This is found abundantly in his writings.

21. He also mentions in the book *Al-Istiqāma*, part 2, page 15, while commenting on a story that Imām Abu'l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī mentioned regarding Abū Bakr al-Shiblī and Abu'l-Ḥusayn al-Nūrī in which there is some *shaṭaḥāt*:[178]

The like of these words and stories are not befitting to be mentioned for following or treading the path and way (*ṭarīqa*) as they contain that which is contrary to the command of Allah and His Prophet. The person from whom the like of these issues originate is either excused due to the limitations in his *ijtihād* or absence in his mind whereas those who follow him are not excused as the truth and path is clear. Even if his sin is forgiven, because good intention and pious action are attached to it, it is necessary to explain that which is praiseworthy from that which is disapproved of so that truth does not become mixed with falsehood.

Abu'l-Ḥusayn al-Nūri and Abū Bakr al-Shiblī were known to have, at times, altered minds, so much that al-Shiblī went to the hospital twice. Al-Nūri was also there. He died in a dense, marshy area because spiritual rapture (*wajd*) had overtaken him and his mind was lost. He whose condition is like this is unsuitable to be followed in a situation that is not in agreement with the command of Allah and His Prophet, even if the person is excused or forgiven, and even if he has a great ranking in terms of faith, piety, sincerity and praiseworthy stations. In that he is no greater than those who were first in

178— *Shaṭaḥāt* is the plural of *shaṭḥ* and are words that are not in line with Sharī'ā and spoken by some Sufis while experiencing a spiritual state. Ḥakīm al-Ummah Mawlānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī writes in *Ta'līm al-Dīn* that "*shaṭḥ* are those words spoken without choice and are contrary to exoteric rules due to being overwhelmed by *warids* (divine inspirations). Such a person is not sinful but should not be followed." (IN)

bringing faith from the Migrants and Helpers (Muhājirūn and Anṣār) and those who followed them in goodness for indeed they are followed in obedience and they are only mentioned in a beautiful way. In terms of that sin or *ta'wīl* that they did, which is not what Allah and His Messenger commanded, they shall not be followed in that. This is the principle the following of which is imperative.

22. He also mentions in the book *Al-Istiqāma*. Part 2, page 56:

Abu'l-Qāsim said, "Know that it is the way of Allah with His *awliyā'* that when they share quarters [in the heart] with something that is apart from Him (*ghayr*) or ponder on something [apart from him] or they allow their heart to be intimate with something [apart from him], then the matter becomes confusing for them and Allah becomes jealous of their hearts so that they sincerely return to His Self, free from that which they had allowed to dwell with them."

He said, "I heard al-Sulamī say, I heard Abū Zayd al-Marwazī the jurist say, I heard Ibrāhīm ibn Sinān say, I heard Muḥammad ibn Ḥassān say, 'While I was traversing the mountain of Lebanon a young man came towards us. The hot air and wind had burnt him. When he saw me he turned and fled. I followed him and said to him, "Advise me something." He responded, "Fear Him, for indeed He is very jealous and does not like to see in the heart of His slave anything aside from Him.""'

He said, "I heard al-Sulamī say, I heard al-Naṣrābādhī say, 'Allah is very jealous, and among his jealousy is that he has not made a path apart from Him.'"

I say that this jealousy is included in that jealousy which the Prophet ﷺ described when he said, "Allah's jealousy is that the believer should not go to that which Allah has forbidden for him." The greatest sin is that you make a partner for Allah despite the fact that He has created you and that you make another deity with Him. There is major polytheism and subtle polytheism. Those who are in the middle carry out the necessary monotheism (*tawḥīd*) and those who have gone ahead and drawn near carry out the recommended aspects along with the necessary aspects. There is nothing more beloved to Allah than monotheism and there is nothing more hated by Him than polytheism. It is because of this that polytheism is not forgiven, rather it is the greatest oppression.

The Prophet ﷺ said, "The example of a believer is that of a fresh tender plant, which the wind bends sometimes and at other times it makes it straight. And the example of a hypocrite is that of a cedar tree which keeps straight till it is uprooted suddenly."

So, Allah Most High afflicts His believing slave with difficulties so that He may purify him from sins and shortcomings; it is from His mercy on His sincere slave that He turns him away from that which He feels jealous of. It is as Allah Most High mentions, *"Thus We did, to turn evil and lewdness away from him. Surely, he was one of Our chosen servants."* (12:24), and as He said, *"He is such that he has no authority over those who believe and place trust in their Lord."* (16:99) So, when He removes from him that which He feels jealous of, then that is from His mercy on him and His choosing him, even though there is difficulty in that. At times He prevents that which he dislikes and at times to purify him through means of affliction

when He is jealous of that. So, when the slave does something that elicits jealousy, He shall punish him according to his sin.

It is as Abu'l-Qāsim has mentioned, "It is narrated from Sarrī that he said, 'Once upon a time, I was seeking a truthful person (*ṣiddīq*) when I passed by some mountains where I came across a group of people who were afflicted with trouble and were sick and blind. I asked them about their situation. They said that here is a man who comes out once a year, he supplicates for them and they are cured. I patiently remained until he came out and supplicated for them and they were cured. I followed his tracks, caught up with him and said to him, "I have an inner illness, what is its cure?" He replied, "Oh Sarrī, leave me alone for indeed He is jealous and would not allow you to dwell with anything apart from Him as then you would fall from His eyes."'"

This is from the saying of He Most High, *"Do not set up any other deity along with Allah, otherwise you will sit condemned, forsaken,"* (17:22) and, *"So do not invoke any other god along with Allah, otherwise you will be among those who are to be punished."* (26:213)

23. He also mentions in the book *Al-Istiqāma*. Part 2, page 150:

For indeed, actual pleasure follows the attaining of that which is appropriately sought after; the actual pleasure is not the acquisition of that which is suitably sought after as some of the philosophers and people of creed (*kalam*) believe and the mentioning of which is predominant among the people of Taṣawwuf and worship, and also predominant in the speech of the *ʿulamā'* of *kalam* who are the people of scrutiny, theory

and creed, and also in the speech of the people of spontaneity (*ahl-badīha*) who are the people of deliberation, need, proofs and eliciting proofs.

Each of these two matters have types and categories, some of which are true and some of which are false, all of them need to be looked at in view of the Book and the Sunnah for the best word is the Word of Allah and the best guidance is the guidance of Muḥammad.

It is because of this that the Imāms of guidance from among those who spoke on knowledge and creed or in relation to actions, guidance and Taṣawwuf would advise following the Book and the Sunnah and forbid that which departs from that as Allah and the Prophet ordered them. Their words in relation to this are much and widespread such as the speech of Sahl ibn ʿAbdullah al-Tustarī: "Every rapture (*wajd*) that does not bear witness to the Book and the Sunnah is false."

24. He also mentions in the book *Al-Istiqāma*. Part 2, page 161:

For indeed intelligence at times denotes the inherent ability in a person with which he comprehends, and at times it denotes the actual comprehension, remembering and knowing.

The first is from the saying of Imām Aḥmad and other predecessors: "Intelligence is natural disposition and wisdom is sagacity." The second is from the saying of a group from among our companions and others: "Intelligence is a type of necessary knowledge."

Both of them are correct for indeed intelligence in the heart is like vision in the eye which at times means the actual sense

and at times the ability that Allah has placed in the eye with which information is acquired; surely each of them is from the knowledge of the slave and what he has discerned. In his knowledge and movement there is strength and each of them has power—there is no strength or power save with Allah (*lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billah*).

Because of this, you will find the upright shaykhs from among the Sufis advising the acquisition of knowledge and ordering the following of it just as you will find the upright people of knowledge advising the acting on knowledge and commanding that. This is because in each path there is a fear of abandoning what is necessary in the other.

25. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya also mentions in the book *Rawḍa al-Muḥibbīn wa Nuzha al-Mushtāqīn*, page 281:

Surely, the lover takes delight from the mention of the beloved and His remaining in his heart without separating from Him. Indeed, He is his intimate friend and companion; he does not take delight from anyone aside from Him. He feels aversion from those who preoccupy him from Him.

Taqī al-Dīn ibn Shaqīr narrated to me. He said, "Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah one day left and I left behind him. When he reached the desert and was separate from people where no one could see him, I heard him recite the poem of a poet:

I come out from between the houses so that I may,
Speak regarding you with the heart in secret and unhindered[179]

179— This poet is Majnūn, the beloved of Laylā, as mentioned by al-Anṭākī in *Tazyīn al-Aswāq*.

26. Ḥāfiẓ ʿUmar ibn ʿAlī al-Bazzār writes in *Al-Aʿlām al-ʿUlya fī Manāqib ibn Taymiyyah*, p. 56, in the chapter regarding some of his miracles and insight:

More than one from the reliable individuals informed me of some of that which they witnessed from his miracles, and I shall mention some of them in summary and begin with some of what I saw.

Among them is that there was between me and some erudite individuals disagreement in a number of issues and our debate in relation to them became prolonged. We began to shorten the discussion in each of the issues by saying we would refer to the shaykh and that which he gives preference to. Then, the shaykh, may Allah be pleased with him, came. When we intended to ask him regarding it, he began [talking] first and began mentioning to us each issue one after another as we had done. He began mentioning the majority of what we had said in each issue and mentioned the views of the *ʿulamā'*. Then he gave preference to that which the proof supported until he arrived on the last of what we had intended to ask him and he clarified for us what we intended to do with him. My companion and I, and those who were with us were left speechless and wonderstruck by what appeared before us and what Allah had revealed to him from what was in our hearts.

Whenever, in those days in which I remained in his company, a question would occur to me, my heart had hardly stopped thinking about it but he would begin to mention it; he would mention the answer in many ways.

The shaykh, the pious, the reciter Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥarīmī narrated to me that he travelled to Damascus. "It so happened that when I got there I had no money at all and I did not know

anyone from there. I began walking in its streets like a confused person when a shaykh came and hastily headed towards me. He made *salām* and behaved in a cheerful way with me. He put a purse in my hand in which there were some authentic *dirhams*. He then said to me, 'Now, spend this and free your mind from that difficulty in which you are in for Allah shall not let you go to waste.' He then returned on his tracks as if he had not come except for me. I prayed for him and became very happy with that. I said to some of the people who I saw, 'Who is this shaykh?' One said, 'It's as if you don't know him, this is Ibn Taymiyyah.' For a long time I never saw him cross this road. My main reason for travelling to Damascus was to meet him. I realized that Allah had revealed me and my situation to him. I did not need anyone after that during my stay in Damascus. Rather, Allah opened up to me from where I had no inkling. I enquired about him after that and headed to visit him and make *salām* with him. He would treat me with dignity and ask about my condition and I would praise Allah Most High.

The shaykh, the *ʿālim*, the reciter Taqī al-Dīn ʿAbdullah, son of the shaykh, the pious, the reciter Aḥmad ibn Saʿīd narrated to me. He said, "I travelled to Egypt when the shaykh was residing there. By chance I got there at night and I was feeling heavy and ill, and we dismounted in some place. I had hardly waited when I heard someone calling my name and teknonym. I answered and I was weak. A group of the shaykh's companions, some of whom I had met in Damascus, visited me. I said, 'How did you know of my arrival and that I had came at this time?' They mentioned, 'The shaykh informed us that you had arrived and that you were ill. He ordered us to hurry in bringing you. We never saw anyone

come and we didn't say anything.' I then knew this was from the miracles of the shaykh, may Allah be pleased with him."

He also narrated to me: "I was ill in Damascus in such a severe illness that prevented me from even sitting. I couldn't feel anything when the shaykh was suddenly by my head and I was feeling heavy with fever and illness. He called me and said, 'Wellbeing (*ʿāfiya*) has come.' He had hardly left when I became well and was cured at that time."

... He also narrated to me that Shaykh Ibn ʿImād al-Dīn al-Muqriʾ al-Muṭarriz said: "I came to the shaykh and had with me at that time some money for my expenses. I offered him my *salām* and he responded to me. He welcomed me and brought me close. He did not ask me whether I had money for my expenses. After some days my money finished and I wanted to leave his gathering after I had prayed with the people behind him. He forbade me and sat me close to him. When the gathering finished, he gave me a bunch of *dirhams* and said, 'You're now without money so make use of this and I was left surprised by this. I realized that Allah had revealed to him my condition at the first instance when I had money with me and at the end when it had ended and I was in need of money."

A person who I do not doubt told me about the shaykh, may Allah be pleased with him, that at the time when the Mongols descended on the Levant to take Damascus and other cities, its people trembled and were extremely fearful. A group of them went to the shaykh and asked him to supplicate for the Muslims and so he turned to Allah. He then said: "Listen to glad tidings. Surely, Allah will grant you victory on such and such day after the third when you will see heads on top of each other." He who had narrated to me said: "I swear by He

in Whose hands is my life (or he swore like this), three days passed as he said when we saw their heads as the shaykh had said on the outskirts of Damascus loaded on top of each other."

The pious and God-fearing Shaykh ʿUthmān ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿĪsā al-Nassāj narrated to me that the shaykh, may Allah be pleased with him, used to visit the ill in the hospital (*bimāristān*) in Damascus everyday. Hence, he once came according to his habit and visited them. He reached a young person from among them, supplicated for him and so he was cured very quickly. He came to the shaykh intending to do *salām*. When the shaykh saw him he greeted him in a cheerful way and drew him close. Then he gave him some money and said: "Allah has cured you, now promise to Allah that you shall hasten your return to your town. Can it be permissible to leave your wife and four daughters without any money and for you to reside here?" The young man said: "I kissed his hand and said master I repent to Allah on your hand. I was amazed at what he had revealed to me. I had left them without money and no one from Damascus knew of my situation."

Al-Bazzār, having narrated a number of miracles, writes:

I say that the miracles of the shaykh, may Allah be pleased with him, are very many. This short book is unsuitable to include more than the amount mentioned here.

27. Ḥāfiẓ ʿUmar ibn ʿAlī al-Bazzār writes in *Al-Aʿlām al-ʿUlya fī Manāqib ibn Taymiyyah*, p. 73, in relation to the death of the Shaykh al-Islam :

They said: Everyone heard of his death to a point that there was none left in Damascus who was able to attend his funeral prayer and intended to go but attended it and made themselves

free for it; this occurred to an extent that the bazars of Damascus were shut and life stopped at that time. With his death people were in a state that preoccupied them from the majority of their matters and means of sustenance. The *emirs*, the leaders, the *'ulamā'*, the jurists, the Turks, the soldiers, men, women and children from the elite and common people all came out.

They said: As far as I know no one remained behind from the majority of people except three people who were famous for opposing him. They hid from people fearing for themselves as they were convinced that when they would go out people would stone them and kill them.

He, may Allah have mercy on him, was washed and shrouded. They said: Those who attended his washing from the elite and common people crowded round the left-over water from his washing until each of them had taken a little amount.

Then his bier was taken out, people saw it and leaned towards it from every direction, each of them intending to acquire blessings (*tabarruk*) from it to an extent it was feared that the body may be crushed before reaching the grave...

A group of those who were present at that moment and saw the people and those who prayed over him agreed that they were over 50,000 in number. Those well versed in narrating and in history said: "A funeral of this number was not heard of except the funeral of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, may Allah be pleased with him."

...That which was seen at his funeral was not seen at the funeral of anyone else in terms of respect, reverence, greatness, standing, people's honoring of it, respecting it, revering the individual, praising him on account of his knowledge, actions, asceticism, worship, turning away from the world, being

preoccupied with the hereafter, poverty, giving preference to others (over himself), kindness, chivalry, patience, steadfastness, bravery, insight, to move ahead and come out openly with the truth, to show ruggedness to the enemies of Allah, the enemies of His Prophet and those who turn away from His religion, to aid Allah, His prophet, His religion and its people, to show humility to the friends of Allah, to lower his self to them, to show them generosity, nobility and reverence, to not take an interest in the world, its adornments, bounties and pleasures, and to show extreme eagerness for the hereafter and to constantly seek it to an extent that you would hear that and its like from men, women and children. All of them would praise him in relation to that which they knew of him.

They said: He was buried that day, may Allah be pleased with him and return over us his many blessings... The recitation of the Qur'ān was completed (*khatam*) many times for him during the nights and days in many places the numbers of which cannot be recorded, especially in Damascus which was under siege, Egypt, Iraq, Tabriz, Basra, etc. to an extent that many people made reading for him their habit and volumes of the noble Qur'ān (*al-rubʿa al-sharīfa*) would be circulated among people to recite and gift its recitation to him.

IMĀM AHL AL-SUNNAH

AḤMAD IBN ḤANBAL

AL-SHAYBĀNĪ

A SECTION FROM THE MUQADDAMA OF SHAYKH IMĀM Abū Muḥammad [Rizqullah ibn ʿAbdul Wahhāb ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz] al-Tamīmī al-Ḥanbalī has been quoted at the end of the second and last volume of Qāḍī Abū Ḥusayn Muḥammad ibn Abū Yaʿlā's[180] *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila*

180— Ibn Rajab in his book *Al-Dhayl ʿalā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila (Appendix to the 'Ranks of the Hanbilis')* writes regarding the *qāḍī* (part one, page 77): "He was a reciter of the Qur'ān, a Hadith scholar, a jurist and a preacher, he was the shaykh of the people of Iraq in his era... he was born in 400 AH, others say it was 401 AH... Ibn al-Jawzī said: 'Al-Tamīmī had mastered the sciences relating to the Qur'ān, jurisprudence, Hadith, literature and preaching. He was handsome and popular among both the elite and common classes...' Ibn ʿAqīl narrates: 'Abū Muḥammad al-Tamīmī was the leader of the students of Imām Aḥmad in terms of nobility, leadership and modesty. He was the best of people in explaining theory, bold in writing religious edicts and was a brilliant speaker.' ...Abū ʿAlī ibn Sakrah said regarding al-Tamīmī's scholarship: 'I have not met anyone in Baghdad like al-Tamimi. I studied a lot under him and it is because of my inability to describe his perfection and superiority that I do not mention him in length here.' Ibn Naṣir said: 'I have not seen a shaykh aged 87 years old better than him in character, guidance and perseverance. Nor have I seen anyone better in speech, elegant in preaching and quicker in answering than he. He was, as his title describes him, a source of beauty for Islam and a source of pride for the people of Iraq in particular and for the Islamic lands in general. We have not seen anyone like him. While he was a youth of 20 he was the head of many scholars, jurists and those who stayed in the company of Imām Aḥmad. What must have been his situation when he had reached close to 90?'"

(Ranks of the Ḥanbalīs). The *Muqaddama* is regarding Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's beliefs (*ʿaqīda*) and the principles of his *madhhab* (may Allah's mercy be upon him and may He be pleased with him).

Imām al-Tamīmī writes:

Imām Aḥmad was once asked once regarding the *murīd*.[181] He replied: "The *murīd* should remain with Allah as Allah wishes and he should leave all which he himself desires for what Allah desires..."

Imām Aḥmad would attach great importance to the Sufis and honor them. He was once asked regarding them and was told that they sat in mosques. He replied: "Knowledge is with those who sit with them the most." Imām Aḥmad would forbid music, and the recitation of the Qurʾān in musical tones and poetry. He also disliked the playing of the flute. As to the songs of the Bedouin camel drivers, he said: "'Abdullah ibn Rawāḥa and many others sang while riding camels, so there is no problem with that.'"

He, may Allah have mercy on him, once said: "Blessed is he whose reputation Allah keeps hidden." He sent a message to ʿAbdul Wahhāb al-Warrāq saying: "Always remain obscure (from people) for I have been tested through fame."

...Abū Bakr al-Marwadhī said, Abū ʿAbdullah told me: "Tell ʿAbdul Wahhab (in other words al-Warrāq): Always remain obscure for I have been tested through fame." I heard Abū Tahir Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Ghubārī al-Faqīh (the jurist), saying: "Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal ﷺ said: 'Blessed is he whose reputation Allah keeps hidden.'"

181— A disciple is one who is stripped of his personal will and hands himself over to a Sufi shaykh for his spiritual development. (IN)

He, may Allah's mercy be upon him, would forbid from visiting the rich and would say: "Seclusion is far better."

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Having mentioned in detail the creed of Imām Aḥmad, Imām al-Tamīmī writes:

This is some of what we know about Imām Aḥmad's beliefs and *madhhab*—may Allah enable us to tread on his way, make him (i.e. Imām Aḥmad) His Messenger's companion in paradise tomorrow, and protect us from slandering and delving into futile things with respect to the Imāms and attributing to them that which Allah has kept them free from *Inshā' Allah*.

1. Imām Ḥāfiẓ Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥusayn Muḥammad ibn Abū Yaʿlā writes in *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part one, p. 36):

Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAbdul Jabbār ibn Rāshid, Abū ʿAbdullah al-Ṣūfī. He heard hadith from ʿAlī ibn al-Jaʿd, Abū Naṣr al-Tammār and Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn among many others. He has narrated some things from our Imām.[182]

2. He also writes in *Ṭabaqāt-al-Ḥanābila* (part one, page 77):[183]

Aḥmad ibn Abū Badr al-Mundhir ibn Badr ibn al-Naḍr, Abū Bakr al-Mughāzilī, the pious shaykh from Baghdad. He was reliable [in narrating hadith] and was counted among those *awliyā'* who shunned the world. His title was *badr* and

182— Meaning Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.

183— The first part of *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* is dedicated to the students of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, those that studied with him, heard Hadith from him and benefited from his knowledge.

that was the name by which he was mostly known. Abū Bakr al-Khallāl mentioned him. He said: "Abū ʿAbdullah (meaning Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal) used to revere him and ask him to sit forward (in the gathering). Badr also had a collection of hadith narrated from Abū ʿAbdullah which also contained various rulings (*masā'il*); I heard them from him and also heard hadith from him. When I first saw his house and the way he sat I could testify to his piety and patience in the face of poverty. When Imām Aḥmad would narrate some hadith, he would say: 'Where is Badr?' Then he would exclaim: 'These are of your variety,' meaning the hadiths relating to asceticism etc. Our Imām would marvel at him and say: 'Who is like Badr? He has surely controlled his tongue.'"

Abū Muḥammad al-Jurayrī said: "One day I was with Badr al-Mughāzilī when his wife had sold a house belonging to her for 30 dinars. Badr said to her: 'Let's distribute these dinars among our brothers and for our daily sustenance let us take each day as it comes.' On that she responded saying: 'Will you keep renouncing the world while we continue desiring it? This is something that cannot be.'"

3. Imām Ḥāfiẓ Qāḍī Abū al-Ḥusayn Muḥammad ibn Abū Yaʿlā also writes in *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part one, p. 78):

Aḥmad ibn Abu'l-Ḥuwārī:[184] his name was Maymūn Abu'l-Ḥasan al-Dimashqī. He narrated from a large group of people

184— Aḥmad ibn Abu'l-Ḥuwārī is a great Sufi Imām from among the close companions of the great Sufi, Imām Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī .

including our Imām.[185] There are 71 years between his demise and that of al-Baghawī. Aḥmad ibn Abu'l-Ḥuwārī said that Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal asked, "When were you born?" I replied the year 64. He said: "That is also when I was born."

Aḥmad ibn Abū al- Ḥuwārī passed away at the beginning of the month of Rajab in the year 246 AH. It was said that al-Ḥuwārī threw his books into the sea saying: "What a brilliant proof you have been. Occupying one's self with the proof after having attained the purpose is impossible." It was also said that Aḥmad ibn Abu'l-Ḥuwārī studied for 30 years; when he reached the pinnacle of knowledge he carried all his books and cast them into the sea exclaiming: "Oh knowledge, I have not done this in contempt of you, nor do I consider your due light. However, I used to write so that I may be, through you, guided to my Cherisher. Now that I am guided I am no more in need of you." He would also say: "There is no proof upon the existence of Allah except He Himself. Knowledge is only sought to learn the etiquettes of service." Junayd would say: "Aḥmad ibn Abu'l-Ḥuwārī is the sweet smelling flower of the Levant (al-Shām)."

4. He also writes in *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part one, part 127):

Junayd ibn Muḥammad ibn Junayd Abu'l-Qāsim al-Kharrāz (the shoemaker). Some say his title was al-Qawārīrī (the bottlemaker), while others say his father was a bottlemaker and he himself a shoemaker. His origins were in Nahawand[186] although

185— Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.

186— Nahawand or Nahavand is a city in the west part of modern day Iran. (IN)

he was born and bred in Baghdad. It was there that he heard hadith, met scholars, remained in the company of the pious and became famous for remaining in the company of Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī and Sarrī al-Saqaṭī. Then he preoccupied himself with worship. He narrated hadith from Ḥasan ibn ʿArafa. He has also quoted many things from our Imām.

From those things which he narrated from our Imām is that which ʿAbdur Raḥmān ibn Mandah informed us about. He said that ʿAlī ibn Jahḍam narrated to us in Makkah from Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Karkhī, who narrated from Abū ʿAlī al-Rūdhbārī who said that he heard Junayd say: "A man came to Abū ʿAbdullah Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal with a handsome young boy. Imām Aḥmad asked him, 'Who is this?' The man replied, 'My son.' So Aḥmad said, 'Do not bring him with you next time.' When the man left, someone asked, 'May Allah aid the shaykh, do you do this to a man who is fully covered and whose son is covered more than he?' Aḥmad replied: 'That which we have intended here is not stopped by them covering themselves. This was the way of our teachers and what they told us of their predecessors.'"

Jaʿfar al-Khuldī said that Junayd once said: "Allah has not placed in the earth knowledge that can be attained by people, except He has assigned for me a portion of it."

Al-Khuldī said: "I heard regarding Junayd that while he would be in the market his portion of worship (*wird*) every day consisted of 300 units of *salah* and the recitation of 30,000 *tasbīḥ*."

Al-Khuldī said he heard Junayd saying: "For 40 years I have not taken off my clothes to retire to bed."

...Junayd said: "We have not learnt Taṣawwuf through idle talk but through hunger, abandoning the world and cutting one's self off from pleasures and those things that are beloved, since Taṣawwuf is certainly the cleansing of our dealings with Allah and its root is remaining aloof from the world just as Ḥāritha[187] said: 'I turned my soul away from the world, so I awakened my nights and made thirsty my day.'"

...Al-Khuldī says that Abū Muḥammad al-Jurayrī said to him: "I was standing by Junayd at the time of his death. It was a Friday and the Persian New Year (Nowrūz), and Junayd was reading the Qur'ān. So I said to him, 'Oh Abu'l-Qāsim, be gentle upon yourself.' Junayd replied, 'Oh Abū Muḥammad, I do not see anyone more in need of worship than myself at this moment in time. This is the time when my book of deeds will be folded.'"

5. He also writes in *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part one, part 137):

Ḥasan ibn al-Layth al-Rāzī: he stayed in the company of our Imām and narrated many things from him. Among them is that he said that it was said to Imām Aḥmad: "Bishr (i.e. Bishr ibn al-Harith)[188] loves you." He replied: "Do not trouble the shaykh, it is more correct that we go and visit him." At this point somebody else said to him, "Shall we bring him?" Imām Aḥmad replied: "No, I dislike that he is brought here to me or that I should go to him so he would behave affectatiously and then I might do the same and then both of us would be ruined."

187— This is alluding to a famous Hadith commonly quoted by the Sufis. (IN)

188— The famous Sufi *shaykh*.

6. Imām Ḥāfiẓ Qāḍī Abu'l-Ḥusayn Muḥammad ibn Abū Yaʿlā writes in *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part one, page 179):

Abū Bakr al-Khallāl narrates that a student of Ḥurra al-Adhanī said: "I presented myself to Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal who said: 'The sign of a true *murīd* is when he abandons every associate who does not intend what he intends.'"

7. He also writes in *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part one, page 186):

Mubārak narrated to us from ibn al-ʿUshārī, who narrated from Aḥmad ibn al-Jundī, who said that he heard ʿAlwān ibn al-Ḥusayn Abu'l-Bishr saying that he heard ʿAbdullah ibn Aḥmad say, "My father was asked, 'Why do you not stay in the company of people?' He replied, 'Due to the dreariness felt when separating.'"

ʿAbdullah said, "There was a bench in our vestibule. When somebody would come desiring that my father sit in privacy with him, he would sit him on the bench. If he did not intend to speak privately, then he would talk holding the doorframe. One day a person came and said to me: 'Tell Aḥmad that Abū Ibrāhīm al-Sā'iḥ is here.' My father came out and they sat on the bench. He then said to me, 'Greet him for he is from the great Muslims,' or 'from the best Muslims.' So I greeted him. My father asked him: 'Tell me something oh Abū Ibrāhīm.' The man said: 'I left a certain place and was close to a certain monastery when some sort of illness paralyzed me. I said to myself, if I were close to that monastery maybe there are monks within who would be able to treat me. All of a sudden a large wild animal appeared and began heading in my direction until it reached me. It gently carried me up upon its back until it

brought me to the door of the monastery. The monks looked at my condition in relation to this beast and all of them, numbering 400, accepted Islam.' Abū Ibrāhīm then asked my father to narrate to him. So he said: 'Five or four nights before the Hajj I was sleeping when I saw the Prophet ﷺ in a dream. He said to me: "Oh Aḥmad." I awoke and sleep overcame me again and in a dream I saw that I was with the Prophet ﷺ once more, who said, "Oh Aḥmad perform the Hajj." I awoke up again. It was a habit of mine that when I would intend to travel, I would pack broken pieces of bread in my sack and so I did. In the morning I headed towards Kufa. I reached there at midday and entered the *jāmiʿ* [masjid]. There I met a pleasantly scented handsome youth who I greeted with *salām*. Then I felt that my original purpose in travelling for the Hajj was somewhat difficult, so when I had completed my prayer I asked the youth, "May Allah have mercy you, is there anyone left who is leaving for the Hajj?" The youth replied, "Wait, till a brother from our brethren arrives." Soon a man who was in a similar situation as me came and the three of us began travelling. While travelling the second man said to the youth, "May Allah have mercy upon you, is it possible for you to be kind to us?" So the youth said, "If Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal was with us then he would be courteous to us." At this point I felt that this was none other than Khidr, so I said to the youth, "Do you have any food?" He replied, "You eat from that which you know and I shall eat from that which I know." During the journey when we would take food the youth would disappear and then return after we would finish. On the third day we arrived in Makkah."[189]

189— Note how a lengthy journey from Kufa in Iraq to Makkah in the Hijaz was covered by foot in a matter of days. (IN)

8. He also writes in *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part one, page 189):

ʿAbdullah ibn Ḥāḍir al-Rāzī is from among the old scholars of Rayy.[190] He was from the God-fearing ones, a person acquainted with the diseases of the souls (*āfāt al-nufūs*), a man of great standing in Baghdad and from the companions of Dhu'l-Nūn al-Miṣrī.

He narrated from Imām al-Dunyā Abū ʿAbdullah Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal al-Shaybānī ﷺ those things that Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Muʾadhdhin al-Nīsābūrī has mentioned...

9. Imām Ḥāfiẓ Qāḍī Abu'l-Ḥusayn Muḥammad ibn Abū Yaʿlā also writes in *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part one, page 195):

ʿAbdullah ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Muhājir, Abū Muḥammad, who was widely known by the name Fawzān...

Al-Burqānī said: "Al-Dāraqutnī said to us that Fawzān was noble and revered and that Aḥmad would revere him." Abū Bakr al-Khallāl has mentioned him. He said, "He was from among those companions of Abū ʿAbdullah who would be asked to sit at the front, those he would feel happy with, those with whom he would sit in private and from those he would borrow money. Abū ʿAbdullah died and he owed Fawzān 50 dinars, so he left a will saying that he should be given from the revenue accrued from the Imām's farming land. Fawzān did not take the sum and absolved Imām Aḥmad of the debt."

Abū Bakr al-Muṭawwiʿī said that Fawzān said, "After Imām Aḥmad was flogged, a youth carrying a bottle containing water

190— Rayy is the ancient name for present day Tehran, Iran. (IN)

smelling of musk visited him in prison. It was the third day and the Imām had been severely flogged." Fawzān continued: "The youth came to him and said, 'I ask in the name of Allah that you allow me to treat you.' Abū ʿAbdullah allowed him and the youth poured the water over him and rubbed him. The pain died down and Imām Aḥmad felt at ease. When the prison guards saw this they followed the youth and said, 'If only you would give us some of this water?' On this the youth replied, 'That is not possible, this water is from paradise and came down on the mountain of Adam in India and I am from the jinn that dwell at that place.' He then disappeared from their eyes, leaving the guards terrified."

10. He also writes in *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part one, page 201):

My mother's maternal uncle Abu'l-Qāsim narrates from Abū ʿAbdullah ibn Baṭṭa who narrated from Abū Ḥafṣ ibn Rajā', who said, "I heard ʿAbdullah ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal say, 'When Abū Zurʿa came, he stayed by my father. My father would mention him a lot and I once heard him say, "I have not performed any of the non-obligatory *salah* but instead preferred the discourses of Abū Zurʿa over my voluntary worship."'"

...With the same chain of narration, he (i.e. Abū Bakr al-Mu'arrikh) said: "Ḥamdūn al-Bardhāʿī came to Abū Zurʿa to write hadith. At his house he saw pots and many carpets." Abū Zurʿa Bakr al-Mu'arrikh said: "These items belonged to Abū Zurʿa's brother and seeing them Ḥamdūn intended to return and not write from him.[191] In the night he dreamt as

191— This was because it was felt that having so many worldly possessions was against the ethos of a life of abstinence. (IN)

if he was on the banks of a lake and saw the shadow of a person in the water who said, 'Are you the one who abstained from narrating from Abū Zurʿa? Do you know that Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal was from amongst the *abdāl*[192] and on his death Allah replaced him with Abū Zurʿa?"

...Abū Zurʿa said that Yazīd ibn Maysara said, "One cannot be considered to be completely wise until he leaves all that the body desires."

Abū Zurʿa said, "Ibrāhīm al-Taymī would not eat anything for one or two months. Ibn Abū Nuʿaym would continuously abstain from food for 15 days and Ibn Zubayr would do so for seven days. Sufyān al-Thawrī said, 'I spent 13 nights with Hajjāj ibn al-Farāfiḍa and I did not see him eat, drink or sleep.'"

Abū Zurʿa said, "The Prophet ﷺ left the world in such a condition that in spite of being able to acquire it he criticized it. He was presented with the keys to the world's treasures and the ability to spend an eternity in it and then enter paradise but He ﷻ refused and said, 'I swear by He in Whose hand is my life, if I wished then the mountains of the world would march along with me having turned into gold and silver.'"

11. Imām Ḥāfiẓ Qāḍī Abu'l-Ḥusayn Muḥammad ibn Abū Yaʿlā also writes in *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part one, page 208):

Abu'l-ʿAbbās Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Ṣalt said he heard ʿAbdur Raḥmān al-Mutaṭabbib, who was known as the physician of the sunnah, say: "I visited Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal

192— *Abdāl* is the plural of *badl*. These are certain righteous people who constantly remain in the *dhikr* of Allah almighty. According to some of the Sufis there are 40 and according to others there are seven in the world at any given time. (IN)

when he was ill and asked him, 'How do you feel?' He replied: 'I praise Allah, I am in His protection.' I then entered on Bishr ibn al-Ḥārith and asked him, 'How do you feel?' He replied, 'I praise Allah I feel like this and that.' So I said to him, 'Do you not fear that these are complaints?' He replied, 'Al-Muʿāfā ibn ʿImrān narrated to us from Sufyān ibn Saʿīd, who narrated from Manṣūr, who narrated from Ibrāhīm, who narrated from ʿAlqama and Aswad, who both said that they heard ʿAbdullah ibn Masʿūd say that the Prophet ﷺ said, "When one expresses thanks to Allah before complaining then the person is not one who is complaining."' So I went to Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and narrated to him the story. Thereafter, whenever I would ask Imām Aḥmad about his health he would say: 'I praise Allah to you, I feel like this and that.'"

12. He also writes in *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part one, page 230):

ʿAlī ibn Muwaffaq Abu'l-Ḥasan al-ʿĀbid: he narrated from Mansūr ibn ʿAmmār and Aḥmad ibn Abū al- Ḥuwārī... he also narrated some things from our Imām...

I read in some books that he performed the Hajj 60 times...

I (the author of *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila*) have quoted from the book of al-Makkī who said that ʿAlī ibn Muwaffaq narrated to me, "I saw in a dream that I was entered into paradise and saw a man sat to eat, and there were two angels on his right and left handing him morsels from all the good things there and he was eating. I saw a man standing by the gate of paradise scrutinizing faces. He would allow some to enter and refuse others. Then I left these men behind me and went further into heaven untill I saw a man in the enclosure of the throne who

had his gaze fixed towards Allah Most High and would not turn away. I then asked Riḍwān: 'Who is this?' He replied: 'This is Maʿrūf al-Karkhī;[193] he worshipped Allah Most High without fearing hell nor in eagerness for paradise but for his love for Him. So Allah has allowed him to look towards him.' Riḍwān mentioned that the other two men in the dream were Bishr ibn al-Ḥārith and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal."

ʿAlī ibn Muwaffaq said: "I came out one day to make the *adhān* when I found a piece of paper, which I took and placed in my sleeve. I performed the call to prayer and the *iqāma* and made salah. On completion, I read the paper on which it was written, 'In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate the Most Merciful. Oh ʿAlī ibn Muwaffaq, do you fear poverty when I am your Cherisher?'"

13. He also writes in *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part one, page 255):

Al-Fatḥ ibn Abu'l-Fatḥ Shukhruf ibn Dāwūd ibn Muzāḥim, Abū Naṣr: he was one of the worshippers *(ʿubbād)* that would travel. He then settled in Baghdad and narrated there from Rajāʾ ibn Murajjā al-Marwazī the book *Al-Sunan*, from Abū Shuraḥbīl ʿĪsa ibn Khalīd ibn Abū al-Yamān al-Ḥimṣī and from Jaʿfar ibn ʿAbdul Wāḥid al-Hāshimī and others. He stayed in the company of our Imām Aḥmad; he would sit with him and ask him about many things. From among those things is that which Abū Bakr ibn al-Khayyāṭ informed us, he said that Abu'l-Ḥusayn al-Sunjardī informed us that Abū Bakr ibn ʿAbdullah ibn Khalaf ibn Bukhīt informed us, that Abū Naṣr Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsa ibn al-Walīd narrated to us that

193— The great Sufi ﷺ.

Abū Bakr al-Marwadhī narrated to us. He said, "I heard Fatḥ ibn Abu'l-Fatḥ al-ʿĀbid (the worshipper); and he was a person who had completed reciting the Qur'ān around 40,000 times. I know that because ʿUbayd ibn Buzaygh said that Fatḥ ibn Abu'l-Fatḥ said to me, 'Do you think Allah will punish a man who has completed reading the Qur'ān 40,000 times?' I also heard him say to Abū ʿAbdullah, 'Who should we ask after you?' Imām Aḥmad replied, 'Ask ʿAbdul Wahhāb, people of his like have the good fortune of being on the truth.'"

Abū Bakr al-Najjād and Abū Muḥammad al-Barbahārī have narrated from him.

Al-Barbahārī said:, "I heard al-Fatḥ ibn Shukhruf say: 'I saw the Most High Cherisher in my sleep, he said to me, 'Oh Fatḥ, be warned I shall not take you by surprise.' I wandered in the mountains for seven years.'" Muḥammad ibn al-Mūsayyib said that Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said, "Khorasan has not produced anyone the like of Fatḥ ibn Shukhruf." He died on a Tuesday towards the middle of Shaʿbān in the year 273AH. Badr al-Maghāzilī[194] performed the funeral prayer over him.

Isḥāq ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Hāni' said: "When Fatḥ ibn Shukhruf died in Baghdad, the funeral prayer was performed 33 times over him and at least 25,000 to 30,000 people participated."

14. Imām Ḥāfiẓ Qāḍī Abu'l-Ḥusayn Muḥammad ibn Abū Yaʿlā also writes in *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part one, page 263):

Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Muthannā Abū Jaʿfar: he narrated some things from our Imām. Among that is that he said, "I came to Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and sat at his door waiting

194— He was one of the close companions of Imām Aḥmad as mentioned above.

for him to come out. When he came out I stood up and he said to me, 'Do you know that the Prophet ﷺ said that "whoever likes that people stand for him, then let him make his abode in the hellfire"?' So I said to him: 'I have only stood to come to you, I did not stand for you.' He liked that [answer]." Abū Jaʿfar said: "I asked Aḥmad, 'What is your opinion of Bishr?'[195] He replied, 'Are you asking me about the fourth of the seven *abdāl* or ʿĀmir ibn ʿAbd Qays? To me his like is only like a man who stands a spear in the ground and then sits on the spearhead. Do you think he has left space for others to sit?'"

15. He also writes in *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part one, page 268):

Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm Abū Ḥamza al-Sūfī: he spoke at the *jāmiʿ* of al-Rusafa.[196] Then he moved to the *jāmiʿ* of the city. He was a scholar of various *qirāʾāt*, he sat with our Imām and benefitted a lot from him. He sat with Bishr ibn al-Ḥārith, Abū Naṣr al-Tammār and Sarrī al-Saqaṭī. He travelled with Abū Turāb al-Nakhshabī,[197] and Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Kattānī, Khayr al-Nassāj and others narrated regarding him.

Aḥmad, a resident of Damascus, informed us from Abū ʿAbdur Raḥmān al-Ḥumayrī that Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Sulamī narrated to us that he heard Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Baghdādī narrate from Ibn al-Aʿrābī who said that Abū Ḥamza said, "Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal would ask me regarding various legal issues (*masāʾil*) in his gatherings, saying,

195— Bishr ibn al-Ḥārith (al-Ḥāfi), the great *Imām*, Sufi, exemplar, ﷺ.

196— Al-Rusafa is that half of Baghdad that is situated on the eastern side of the River Tigris. The west side of the river is Al-Karkh.

197— These are four figures from the great Imāms and leaders of Taṣawwuf ﷺ.

'What do you say, oh Sufi?'[198] I (Qāḍī Ḥusayn ibn Abū Yaʿlā) say: Through his question, he—and Allah is most knowledgeable—intended to acknowledge him if he was correct and clarify for him if he had made a mistake.

16. Imām Ḥāfiẓ Qāḍī Abu'l-Ḥusayn Muḥammad ibn Abū Yaʿlā also writes in *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part one, page 318):

Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr ibn Dāwūd ibn Ibrāhīm Abū Jaʿfar al-ʿĀbid (the worshipper), who was known by the name al-Ṭūsī. He heard from Ismāʾīl ibn ʿUlayya, Sufyān ibn ʿUyayna, ʿAffān ibn Muslim and our Imām Aḥmad among others. ʿAbdullah al-Baghawī, Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd and others have narrated from him. Al-Khallāl has mentioned him. He said, "He has narrated from Aḥmad things that others have not. He would sit, on account of his piety, in the company of Maʿrūf and others."

Ibn Thābit has mentioned him. He said, "It was narrated to me from ʿAbdul ʿAzīz ibn Jaʿfar who said that Abū Bakr al-Khallāl narrated to us that al-Mārrūdhī informed me. He said, 'I asked Abū ʿAbdullah (i.e. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal) regarding Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr al-Ṭūsī. He replied, "I only know well of him, he was a man of salah." I asked him, "Did he frequently visit ʿAffān with you?" He replied, "And before that as well." I said, "I heard him (Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr al-Ṭūsī) say, 'I was with Maʿrūf, who said to me after completing the evening prayer, 'I spoke to a man here with whom supper should be eaten. I went to him and when it was dawn he brought a quince to me and began to say, "Do you know where this quince is

198— Note the love, friendship and affection underlying Imām Aḥmad's words.

from at this time of season?'" Abū ʿAbdullah then said: "That's enough for you oh Abū Jaʿfar."""

Ibn Thābit said that Abū ʿUmar al-Ḥasan ibn ʿUthmān al-Wāʿiẓ informed us of his story with Maʿrūf, that Aḥmad ibn Jaʿfar al-Qaṭīʿī narrated to us, that ʿAbbās ibn Yūsuf al-Shaklī narrated to us, that Saʿīd ibn ʿUthmān narrated to us. He said, "We were with Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr al-Ṭūsī one day and he had with him a group of the people of hadith and a group of the ascetics. That day was a Friday and I heard him say, 'I once fasted and told myself that I would only eat what is lawful. My day passed and I didn't find anything and so I adjoined the second day, the third day and the fourth day. When the time to break fast came on the fourth day I said I would definitely eat tonight with he whose food Allah has made pure. So I went to Maʿrūf al-Karkhī. I said *salām* to him and sat until he had prayed the Maghrib and those who were with him in the mosque. Only me and another man was left. He turned to me and said, 'Oh Ṭūsī.' I said, '*Labbayk*.' He said, 'Go to your brother and eat supper with him.' So I said, 'I do not have anything to eat.' Maʿrūf ignored me and then repeated the question again, so I replied, 'I do not have any supper.' He then did that a third time and so I said, 'I do not have any supper with me.' He remained quiet for a while and then said, 'Come to me.' So I struggled to my feet even though, due to severe weakness, I did not have any strength to stand. I sat on his left and he took my right hand and entered it into his left sleeve from where I took a quince that had been bitten. I ate the quince in which I found the taste of every excellent food and became free from want of water." The narrator mentioned,

"A man who was with us present asked him, 'Was that you, oh Abū Jaʿfar?' He replied:,'Yes, and I can tell you more. Since eating that fruit, I have not ate anything sweet except I have found in it the taste of that quince.'"

Abu'l-Qāsim ibn al-Busrī informed us from Abū ʿAbdullah al-Faqīh that Ibn Makhlad narrated to us, that ʿAbbās al-Dūrī narrated to us, that Muḥammad ibn Ashras al-Ḥarb narrated to us, that Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr al-Ṭūsī narrated to us. He said, I heard Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal say: "I saw the Prophet ﷺ in a dream. I said, 'Oh Prophet of Allah, is everything that Abū Hurayrah narrated from you true?' He said, 'Yes.'"

...Muḥammad ibn 'Imran al-Khayyāṭ Abū Jaʿfar said. "I heard Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥanbal in his house say, 'It has reached me regarding my brother Manṣūr ibn ʿAmmār that he used to say, "Oh Allah, difficulties have engulfed us and You are the One that stores them. Do not punish us for You are capable of forgiving. My Master You have shown us Your strength and You shall forever remain powerful so show us Your forgiveness and continue forgiving."'"

...Isḥāq ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ḥarbī said, "I heard Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr say, 'We were with Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal when a man said to him, "Oh Abū ʿAbdullah, what do you say regarding the hadith that is narrated that ʿAlī ﷺ said, 'I am the divider of the hellfire.' He replied, 'What is your objection regarding that? Have we not narrated that indeed the Prophet ﷺ said to ʿAlī ﷺ that "only a believer will love you and only a hypocrite shall hate you"?' We replied, 'Of course.' So he asked, 'Where are the believers?' We said, 'In paradise.' He then asked, 'And the hypocrites?' We said, 'In hell.' He said, 'So, ʿAlī is the divider of the hellfire.'"'"

Ibn Thābit narrated with his chain of narration. He said: It was said to Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr al-Ṭūsī: "Oh Abū Jaʿfar, which day is it according to you today? People are in doubt regarding it. Is it the Day of ʿArafa or another day?" He said, "Have patience." He entered the house and then came out. He said, "According to me it is the day of ʿArafa." People shied from asking him, "Where did you get that from?" So they counted the days and nights and at the end of the month it transpired that the day which Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr had said was the Day of ʿArafa. Abū Bakr ibn Salām then said to him, "How did you know it was the day of ʿArafa?" Abū Jaʿfar replied: "I entered my house and I asked my Cherisher and He showed me the people standing in the *mawqif* [of ʿArafa]."

17. He also writes in the *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part one, page 320):

Muḥammad ibn Muṣʿab Abū Jaʿfar al-Daʿʿāʾ: I read in the book of Ibn Thābit that Muḥammad ibn Rizq informed us, that Abū ʿAlī ibn al-Ṣawwāf informed us, that ʿAbdullah ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal narrated to us, he said: I heard my father mention Muḥammad ibn Muṣʿab al-Daʿʿāʾ. He said, "He was a pious man, he would narrate stories and supplicate standing in the mosque." ʿAbdullah ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said: My father said: "He came to me, wrote hadith from me and sat in the way you are presently sitting on the platform." He said that among that which he used to say was: "Oh my Cherisher, hide me beneath your throne."

Abū Bakr al-Muʾarrikh (the historian) informed us by way of reading, that al-Azharī narrated to us, that ʿAlī ibn ʾUmar

al-Ḥāfī narrated to us, that Muḥammad ibn Makhlad narrated to us, that Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Umar ibn al-Ḥakam narrated to us. He said: I heard Muḥammad ibn Muṣ'ab al-Zāhid say, "Whoever thinks that You (Allah) shall not speak, nor be seen in the hereafter, then he disbelieves in Your existence, he has not recognized You. I testify that You are above the throne and above the seven skies unlike what Your heretical enemies say."

With the same chain of narration, Naṣr ibn Manṣūr al-Sā'igh said: "I heard Muḥammad ibn Muṣ'ab al-'Ābid, and he was someone whose supplications would be answered. I did not see anyone able to recite the Book of Allah more beautifully than he. I heard him say: 'I heard Ibn al-Mubārak mentioning from al-Awzā'ī from Bilal ibn Sa'd who said, "Do not look at how small a sin is but look at He who you are disobeying."'"

Al-Sā'igh said: "Ma'mūn ordered for Muḥammad ibn Muṣ'ab to be imprisoned. He was taken to prison where he raised his head towards the sky and said, 'I swear to You that You will only let them imprison me for one night.' He was taken out in the middle of the night and performed the morning prayer in his home. He died in Baghdad in the year 228 AH."

18. Imām Ḥāfiẓ Qāḍī Abu'l-Ḥusayn Muḥammad ibn Abū Ya'lā also writes in *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part one, page 333):

Mūsā ibn 'Īsā al-Jaṣṣāṣ al-Baghdādī: Abū Bakr al-Khallāl has mentioned him saying: "He was God-fearing, a renouncer and an ascetic. He heard Yaḥyā al-Qaṭāan, Ibn Mahdī and others like them. He would only narrate the *Fiqh* rulings

of Abū ʿAbdullah, and somethings that he heard from Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī in relation to asceticism and piety. He had many of the rulings of *Fiqh* from Abū ʿAbdullah, and Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad al-Warrāq narrated to me a good portion of them. He said, 'The rest was lost to me and so I went to al-Ḥarbiyya to the home of his daughter, thinking perhaps we may acquire some principles (*uṣūl*). We were eager for that but did not get hold of anything.'"

Abū Bakr al-Mutawwiʿī and Abū Bakr ibn Ḥammād, who was a man of great lofty rank, narrated some rulings from him.

19. He also writes in *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part one, page 336):

Muthannā ibn Jāmiʿ Abuʾl-Ḥasan al-Anbārī. He narrated from Saʿīd ibn Sulaymān al-Wāsiṭī, Muḥammad ibn al-Ṣāliḥ al-Dūlābī, ʿAmmār ibn Naṣr al-Khurāsānī, Surayh ibn Yūnus, and our Imām Aḥmad from among others. Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Haytham al-Dūrī and Yūsuf ibn Yaʿqūb ibn Isḥāq ibn al-Bahlūl have narrated from him among others. I read in the book of Abū Bakr al-Khallāl. He said, "Muthannā was pious and of a lofty status in the eyes of Bishr ibn al-Ḥārith[199] and ʿAbdul Wahhāb al-Warrāq." It was said that he was one whose supplications would be accepted. His way was to shun and expose the people of innovation (*bidʿa*). Abū ʿAbdullah knew his worth and right. He narrated some excellent rulings from him.

...I have read in some of the books of Abū Bakr al-Khallāl: I heard ʿAlī ibn Bashshār say, "I heard a person who heard

199— He is the Sufi and exemplar Imām ﷺ.

Muthannā al-Anbārī say, 'Do not be over anxious about something that has been placed in your trust. For you will become an object of suspicion for the person you are answerable to and remain unhappy with what he allots you in exchange."

Muthannā said: "I asked Abū ʿAbdullah which person was superior? A man who eats to his fill, performs many prayers and fasts, or a man who eats less and performs less non-obligatory worship but spends more time in meditation? Imām Aḥmad then mentioned what had been narrated about meditation, he said, 'The meditation for a short while is better than the standing in prayer of a whole night,' or something to that effect. From this I assumed meditation was superior according to him."

20. He also writes in *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part one, page 381):

Maʿrūf ibn al-Fayruzān, Abū Mahfūẓ al-ʿĀbid (the worshipper), who is famously known as al-Karkhī, which is attributed to the area of Karkh in Baghdad. He was one of those famous for ascetism and shunning the world. The pious would flock to him and the knowers of Allah (*ʿārifs*) would gain blessings from meeting him. He was described as one whose supplications would be accepted and many miracles have been narrated from him. He has narrated a few hadiths from Bakr ibn Ḥubaysh, Rabīʿ ibn Ṣabīḥ and others. Khalaf ibn Hishām al-Bazzār, Zakariyyā ibn Yaḥyā al-Marwadhī and Yaḥyā ibn Abū Ṭālib narrated from him among others.

He narrated from our Imām Aḥmad a story and it is that which al-Wālid al-Saʿīd informed us from Muḥammad ibn Fāris who is known as Ibn al-Ghūrī who said that Aḥmad ibn

al-Munādī narrated to us. He said that Abū Bakr ʿUmar ibn Ibrāhīm narrated to us, who said Yaḥyā ibn Aktham al-Qāḍī narrated to us: "I heard Maʿrūf when Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal was mentioned to him. He said, 'I saw Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal as a youth and on him could be seen the effects of piety. I heard him say a few words in which there was a lot of goodness. I heard him say, "Whoever knows that when he dies he shall be forgotten, then he has done well and not bad."'"

Abū al-Faraj ʿAbdul Wahhāb ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz al-Tamīmī has also narrated this story from Maʿrūf. He said, "I heard my father say that it was said to Abū Maḥfūẓ Maʿrūf al-Karkhī: 'Have you seen Abū ʿAbdullah Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥanbal?' He replied, 'Yes, I have seen him and heard him say two sentences that worried me. I heard him say: 'Whoever knows that when he dies he shall be forgotten, then he has done well and not bad.'"

Abū Saʿīd ibn al-Aʿrābī mentioned that Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal used to say: "Maʿrūf al-Karkhī is from among the *abdāl* and someone whose supplications are accepted." Maʿrūf al-Karkhī was mentioned in the gathering of Imām Aḥmad. Some peope who were present said, "He is of little knowledge." Imām Aḥmad said, "Be restrained, may Allah keep you well. True knowledge is only that which Maʿrūf has achieved."

Al-Muʿāfā ibn Zakariyyā al-Jarīrī mentioned: "It was narrated to me from ʿAbdullah ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal that he said, 'I asked my father whether Maʿrūf had any knowledge.' He replied: 'My son, Maʿrūf possesses the root of knowledge which is the fear of Allah Most High.'"

Ismāʿīl ibn Shaddād narrates. He said that Sufyān ibn ʿUyayna asked us, "Where are you from?" We replied, "From Baghdad." He said, "What has that learned man who is among you done?" We asked, "Who is that?" He said: "Abū Maḥfūẓ Maʿrūf." We replied that he is well. Sufyān said, "The people of that city shall remain well as long as he remains among them."

Our Imām Aḥmad said to al-Marwadhī: "When you are informed of something regarding the heavens from Maʿrūf, then accept it." Maʿrūf was the teacher of Sarrī al-Saqaṭī and Maʿrūf remained in the company of Dāwūd al-Ṭāʾī...

ʿAbdul Wahhāb al-Warrāq said: "I have not seen anyone more fearing of Allah Most High than Maʿrūf al-Karkhī."

Maʿrūf said, "A person's speech regarding those things which do not concern him causes Allah to abandon his aid."

Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr[200] said: "I one day went to Maʿrūf. I visited him again the next day and saw a wound on his face. I was afraid to ask him about it but with him was a man who was more courageous than I. He asked, 'Oh Abū Maḥfūẓ, we were with you on the preceding night, with us was Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr but we did not see anything on your face?' Maʿrūf replied, 'Take the knowledge which we possess and benefit from it.' He said, 'I ask you for the sake of Allah.' Maʿrūf trembled and said to him, 'Woe onto you, what need do you have in knowing that? Yesterday night I went to the Grand Mosque [in Makkah] where I offered prayer and then the last ʿIsha. I then went to *Zamzam* and drank of it when I slipped and my head struck a door. This is what you see.'"

200— He is Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭūsī, the student of Imām Aḥmad ibn Hanbal ﷺ, who was mentioned a few pages earlier.

A man said to Maʿrūf, "Advise me." He replied, "Have trust in Allah and greatly remember death until you have no other companion apart from it. Know that the cure to difficulties is keeping it concealed, and that people cannot benefit or harm you or give you anything or stop you."

...Maʿrūf said: "When Allah intends good for a slave He opens for him the door of performing good deeds and closes the door of disputes. And when Allah intends ill for a person he opens for him the door of disputes and closes the door of deeds to him."

21. He also writes in *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part one, page 418):

Yūsuf ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī, Abū Yaʿqūb al-Rāzī, who was from the Sufi shaykhs. He travelled greatly and remained in the company of Dhu'l-Nūn al-Miṣrī, Abū Turāb al-Nakhshabī and Abū Saʿīd al-Kharrāz. He narrated from Dhu'l-Nūn and heard from our Imām Aḥmad. He came to Baghdad and Abū Bakr al-Najjār heard from him there.

Al-Walīd al-Saʿīd informed us from Abū Muḥammad al-Khallāl that ʿAbdul Wāḥid ibn ʿAlī narrated to me, that Aḥmad ibn Salmān narrated to us. He said, "I heard Yūsuf ibn al-Ḥusayn say that he heard Dhu'l-Nūn al-Miṣrī say: 'He whose worth has been made unknown, then his veil has been removed.'"

Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Muʾadhdhin al-Nīsābūrī mentioned that Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdullah ibn Isḥāq informed us that Abū ʿAmr al-ʿUthmānī informed us, that Abu'l-Ḥasan Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdullah al-Rāzī narrated to us in Damascus, that Yūsuf ibn

al-Ḥusayn al-Rāzī al-Ṣūfī narrated to me, that Abū ʿAbdullah Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal narrated to us, that Hilāl ibn Suwayd Abu'l-Muʿallā narrated from Anas ibn Mālik ﷺ who said: "The Prophet of Allah ﷺ was gifted three birds of which he ate one and his attendant stored the other two. The next day, the attendant presented a bird to the Prophet ﷺ at which the Prophet ﷺ said, 'Did I not forbid you from storing anything for the next day? Allah surely provides sustenance each day.'" Yūsuf says, "I came to Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal at the beginning of the rule of [Caliph] al-Mutawakkil. He asked me about my country and said, 'What do you need and why have you come to me?' I replied, 'So you may narrate hadith to me.' Imām Aḥmad said, 'Has it not reached you that I have stopped narrating the traditions?' I said, 'Of course. However, narrate something to me with which I may remember you with and pray for forgiveness with for you.' He narrated the above tradition to me and then said, 'It is from your category oh Sufi.'[201] Abū Aḥmad al-ʿAssāl al-Asbahānī narrated this from Yūsuf, who narrated it from Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, but he did not mention the conversation.

I read in the book of Ibn Thābit: Abū Saʿīd al-Mālīnī narrated to us, that Abū ʿAlī Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Ḥamza al-Ṣūfī informed us, that Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Qurashī narrated to us, that Yūsuf ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Rāzī narrated to us. He said, "I said to Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal: 'Narrate to me.' So he said, 'What will you do with hadith,

201— Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal did not know that at the end of time a group would allege that Sufism is wrong and that the Sufis are a group which has no connection to Islam otherwise he would not have treated this Sufi with this love and affection.

oh Sufi?' I said: 'It doesn't matter, narrate to me.' He said, 'Marwān al-Fazārī narrated to us from Hilāl Abu'l-'Alā' (this is what al-Mālīnī said but he means Abu'l-Mu'allā) from Anas ﷺ who said: "The Prophet ﷺ was gifted two birds of which one was presented to him [to eat]. In the morning he said: 'Do you have anything to eat?' So the other bird was presented. The Prophet ﷺ said: 'Where is this from?' Bilal ﷺ said: 'I stored it for you oh Prophet of Allah.' The Prophet said, 'Oh Bilal, do not fear poverty from the One with the throne. Surely Allah presents the daily sustenance.'

With the same chain of narration, Yūsuf ibn al-Ḥusayn said: "In the days of journeying I was in the Levant (*al-Shām*) holding a staff on which was written:

Travel in the countries of Allah as a wayfarer,
And cry on thy soul in lamentation,

Walk with Allah's light in His land,
The light of Allah is a sufficient lamp.

With his chain of transmission, he said: "Yūsuf ibn al-Ḥusayn had a bag on which it was written:

Your day shall not forget you,
And your sustenance shall not miss you,

Whoever is desirous of people,
He shall become a prisoner of people,

Let yourself exert in pleasing Allah,
For surely Allah is enough for you."

22. He also writes in *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* (part one, page 427):

Mukhkha, the sister of Bishr ibn al-Ḥārith.[202] Bishr had two sisters aside from her. One was called Muḍgha and the other was Zubda. The three were sisters known for worship and piety. The eldest was Muḍgha who was older than Bishr. Zubda was given the teknonym Umm ʿAlī. It is said that when Muḍgha died Bishr greatly grieved over her and cried immensely. This was mentioned to Bishr who said, "I read in some books that when a slave falls short in serving his Cherisher then He takes away his companion. She was my companion in the world."

Ibrāhīm al-Ḥarbī said, "Bishr most certainly said this the day his sister Mukhkha died."

ʿAbdullah ibn Aḥmad said, "Mukhkha, the sister of Bishr ibn al-Ḥārith, came to my father and said to him: 'I am a lady whose financial capital is two *dāniqayn*.[203] I purchase cotton that I spin into thread and sell for half a *dirham* and continue to suffice from one Friday to the next on one *dāniq*. Ibn Ṭāhir al-Ṭā'if came with a torch and began speaking to the people of virtue. I benefitted from the light of the torch and spun several yarns of thread. Then the light went away and I realized that Allah wanted something from me. [So she asked Imām Aḥmad], clarify the matter for me, may Allah keep you pure.' Imām Aḥmad replied: 'You shall spend the two *dāniqayn* in the way of Allah and remain without any capital till Allah gives you something good in exchange.'" ʿAbdullah [Imām Aḥmad's son] said, "I said to my father, what if you had said take out that

202— Bishr al-Ḥafi the great Sufi ﷺ.

203— A small silver coin, made up of six *dirhams*. (IN)

which you earned from spinning the extra yarn?" He replied, "My son, her question cannot be interpreted in any other way." He then asked, "Who was she?" I said, "Mukhkha, the sister of Bishr ibn al-Ḥārith." He said, "She came to me from there."

ʿAbdullah ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal also narrates: "I was with my father one day at home when a person knocked on the door. He said to me, 'Go, see who is at the door.' I came out and there was a woman who said, 'Take permission for me to enter upon Abū ʿAbdullah.' I sought his permission and he said, 'Let her enter.' The woman entered, sat down and made *salām* to him and said, 'Oh Abū ʿAbdullah, I am a woman who spins thread at night under a lamp. At times the light goes off so I spin in the moonlight. Is it compulsory on me that I clarify [to my buyers] the thread spun in the moonlight from the thread spun under the lamp?' Imām Aḥmad replied, 'If you feel there is a difference [in the quality] then it is necessary for you to clarify this.' The woman then asked, 'Oh Abū ʿAbdullah is the cry of a sick person a complaint of the illness (*shakwā*)?' Imām Aḥmad replied, "I feel that it isn't a complaint of the illness but a complaint to Allah Most High.'" ʿAbdullah ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal narrates that the lady bid Imām Aḥmad farewell and left. Imām Aḥmad then said, "Oh my son, I have never heard a person ask such questions. Follow her and see which house she enters." I followed her until she entered the house of Bishr ibn al-Ḥārith and realized she was his sister. I returned and told him. He said, "It is impossible that a woman like her could be anyone but the sister of Bishr."

Abū ʿAbdullah al-Qaḥṭabī said: "Bishr has a sister who greatly fasted and prayed. Bishr said, 'I learned piety from my sister.

She would always exert effort not to eat anything that had been prepared by anyone else." Zubda, the sister of Bishr, said, "Bishr visited me one night and placed one foot inside the house and the other outside. He remained like that in thought until the morning. In the morning, I asked him, 'What were you thinking about the entire night?' He replied: 'I was thinking of Bishr the Christian, Bishr the Jew, Bishr the Zoroastrian, I was thinking of my soul and my name Bishr.' So I said, 'What is that deed of yours that has proceeded ahead towards Him on account of which He has made you special?' I then thought about his superiority over me and that He makes me from His close companions and clothes me in the garment of His beloveds."

Here ends the quotations from the first part of *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* that is dedicated to the students of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, those who benefited from his knowledge or heard from him.

Now, Allah willing, we shall quote various other books that are related to the subject of our book, and Allah Who is glorified is the Giver of *tawfīq*.

23. Al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Imām Abū Nuʿaym has mentioned in *Ḥilya al-Awliyā'* (part 8, p. 337):

Abū Bakr ibn Mālik narrated to us, that ʿAbdullah ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal narrated to us. He said, I heard Mūsā al-Ṭūsī say, I heard ʿAlī ibn Kashram say, I heard Bishr ibn al-Ḥārith say: "Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal entered his hand into a blacksmith's

bellow and took out gold that was of a deep color and some delicately made utensils." This was then mentioned to Imām Aḥmad who said, "Praise be to Allah who has made Bishr happy with what we have made."

24. Al-Imām al-Ḥāfiẓ Aḥmad ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī writes in his book *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* (part one, p. 445):

Al-Marrwadhī said: It was said to Abū ʿAbdullah, "Bishr ibn al-Ḥārith has died." Imām Aḥmad said, "He has passed away, may Allah have mercy on him. There is no equal to him in the Ummah except ʿĀmir ibn ʿAbd Qays."

25. Al-Ḥāfiẓ Abu'l-Faraj ʿAbdur Raḥmān ibn al-Jawzī has mentioned in his book *Manāqib Maʿrūf al-Karkhī wa Akhbāruhu*[204] *The Virtues of Maʿrūf al-Karkhī and Details about Him* (part six, in the chapter entitled *The Scholars' Praise of Him*):

Among them (those who praised him) was Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal... ʿAbdullah ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said, "Maʿrūf al-Karkhī was mentioned in my father's gathering when a person said, 'He is of less knowledge.' My father said to him, 'Withhold from saying further, may Allah keep you well. Knowledge is only that which Maʿrūf has attained.

...I heard ʿAbdul ʿAzīz ibn Manṣūr say, I heard my grandfather say: "I was with Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal when Maʿrūf al-Karkhī was mentioned in his gathering. Some people who were present said, 'He is of less knowledge.' So Aḥmad said, 'Withhold from

204— This is an excellent book consisting of information about Imām Maʿrūf al-Karkhī published by Dar al-Kutub al-ʿArabi.

saying further, may Allah keep you well. Knowledge is only that which Maʿrūf has attained.'"

...ʿAbdullah ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said: "I asked my father whether Maʿrūf had any sort of knowledge? He replied, 'Oh my son he has with him the essence of knowledge which is the fear of Allah.'"

26. Al-Ḥāfiẓ ibn al-Jawzī has also mentioned in part seven, in the chapter entitled *Fī Dhikr Tabarruk al-ʿUlamā' w'al-Ṣāliḥīn bi Ziyāratihī, (Mention of the Blessings Gained by the ʿUlamā' and the Pious Through Visiting Him)*:

A group of the senior scholars and ascetics would flock to him and gain blessings by visiting him. Among them was Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Bishr ibn al-Ḥārith, Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn and other famous people and some of the pious who were unknown...

Abū ʿAbdur Raḥmān ʿAbdullah ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said, "Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn came to my father one day and said to him, 'Oh Abū ʿAbdullah, I yearn to meet Maʿrūf al-Karkhī and listen to his words. How do you feel accompanying me and we go together?' Imām Aḥmad said, 'I fear we may trouble him.' Yaḥyā said, 'No.' We then went to him and when Maʿrūf al-Karkhī saw my father, he honored him, exalted him and welcomed him. They spoke for a lengthy while. When he intended to leave, Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn said to him, 'What is the meaning of the two *sajda* of *sahw*? Why have they been made a part of prayer?' Maʿrūf quickly replied, 'As a punishment for the heart, may Allah keep you well, when it makes a mistake; why did it commit the mistake while

He is in front of him?' My father then said to him, 'Oh Abū Zakariyyā, this is from your knowledge. Is this in your books or in the books of your companions?'"

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The commentator on this book writes in the footnotes to the above passage:

See *Al-Kawākib al-Durriyya* (part one, page 268) in which it is mentioned that al-Ghazālī said: "Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and Ibn Maʿīn would visit Maʿrūf al-Karkhī and ask him things, though there was none well versed as they were in the exterior sciences. They were asked, 'Do the likes of you visit him?' They would answer, 'What should we do if we are faced with an issue which is not mentioned in the Book of Allah or the Sunnah of His Prophet? Al-Mustafa ﷺ truly said, 'Ask the people of piety.'"

27. Al-Imām al-Ḥāfiẓ Shaykh al-Islam Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdur Raḥmān ibn Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī has mentioned in his book *Kitāb al-Jarḥ wa'l-Taʿdīl* (p. 304):

ʿAbdur Raḥmān narrated to us, that Ṣāliḥ [ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal] narrated to us. He said, "I came home one day when I was told that my father was looking for me yesterday. So I asked him, 'Were you looking for me?' He replied, 'A man came to me yesterday who I would have loved that you had seen him. While I was seated at the beginning of the midday a man came to the door making *salām* and it was as if my heart felt at rest and so I stood and opened the door. There I found a man wearing a *farw*[205] with a cloth over his head. There was no *qamīṣ* under

205— A kind of garment lined with the skin of animals, worn especially to save someone from the cold. (IN)

his *farw*, nor did he have with him a waterbag, a travel bag or even a staff. The sun had caused him to tan. I said, "Enter." So he entered the vestibule and I asked him, "From where have you come?" The man replied, "From the eastern areas. I wanted to visit some of these shores. If it wasn't for your standing I would not have entered this city but I wanted to say *salām* to you." I then asked him, "Did you come like this?" He replied, "Yes, I wanted to ask you what abstinence from the world is?" I replied, "The shortening of hopes." I began to marvel at this man and thought to myself that I did not have any gold or silver to gift him. So I entered the house and brought him four pieces of round bread and said to him, "I don't have any gold or silver, I only have this from my sustenance." The man said, "Oh Abū ʿAbdullah, would it please you if I accepted that?" I replied yes and so he took them and placed them by his bosom and said, "I feel that they should suffice my provisions until Raqqa. I leave you in the care of Allah." I remained standing, watching him till he left.' He would mention this man a lot."

28. He also mentions in his book *Kitāb-al-Jarḥ wa'l-Taʿdīl* (p. 306):

ʿAbdur Raḥmān narrated to us, that my father narrated to us, that Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥuwārī narrated to us, that ʿUbayd al-Qārī narrated to us. He said, "The paternal uncle of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal entered upon Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal while he (Imām Aḥmad) was resting his cheek on his palm. The uncle said, 'Oh my nephew, what is this sorrow? What is this grief?' Aḥmad turned his head towards him and said, 'Oh uncle, glad tidings is for he whose mention Allah keeps hidden.'"

29. Imām Ḥāfiẓ Abu'l-Qāsim ʿAlī ibn Asākir mentions in his book *Tārikh Dimashq*[206] in the biography of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (vol. 5, p. 299):

...ʿAlī ibn Abū Qarāra said, "My mother informed us, and she was paralyzed and crippled from the legs for quite some time. One day she said to me, 'Will you not go to that man (i.e. Imām Aḥmad) and ask him to supplicate to Allah for me?' So I went to Aḥmad and knocked on the door while he was in the hallway. He said, 'Who is that?' I said, 'Oh Abū ʿAbdullah, it is one of your students.' He said, 'What is your need?' I said, 'My mother is ill and crippled and she asks you that you supplicate to Allah for her.' He said, 'Oh person, who is there who shall supplicate on our behalf?' He repeated this many times and it was as if I felt ashamed and so I left and said *salām ʿalaykum*. Then an old lady came out of his house and said, 'I saw him moving his lips saying something and I hope he is praying for you.' I then returned to my mother and knocked on the door. My mother said, 'Who is it?' I replied: 'It's me ʿAlī.' She stood up and opened the door. I said, 'There is none worthy of worship save Allah. What happened?' She said, 'I don't know anything except that I stood on my legs and was surprised by that and praised Allah.' This happened in the time it took to return [from Imām Aḥmad]."

206— In the footnotes here, Shaykh ʿAbdul Ḥafiẓ mentions that his citations are from a shortened version of Ibn Asākir's work entitled *Tahdhib Tārikh Dimashq al-Kabir* by Shaykh ʿAbdul Qādir Badrān (published by Dar al-Masirah, Beirut). While translating this book, I have largely compared citations with the original books, but have been unable to get hold of the relevant volumes of this work and so referenced the quotes in this section to Ibn Asakir's original and lengthy *Tārikh Dimashq* (published by Dar al-Fikr, Beirut, 1995). (IN)

30. Imām Ḥāfiẓ Abu'l-Qāsim ʿAlī ibn Asākir mentions in his book *Tārīkh Dimashq* (vol. 5, p. 300):

…ʿAbdullah ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal narrated to us. He said, "My father would never miss the [*nafl*] *rakaʿāt* prayed between the two night prayers (Maghrib and ʿIshāʾ), and nor the ones after them. He would quietly recite the Qurʾān during his daily portion of the night prayers, and at times loudly."

…ʿAbdullah ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal narrated to us. He said, "Each day and night my father would offer 300 *rakaʿāt* of prayer. When he fell ill from the whipping that weakened him, he would perform 150 *rakaʿāt* of prayer each day and night; he was at the time close to 80 years of age. He would recite a seventh portion of the Qurʾān each day and finish on the seventh day. He would also complete reciting the Qurʾān on every seventh night, and that was apart from the portion he would recite in the prayers of the day. He would pray the ʿIshāʾ in the last hour, sleep a little and then perform *salah* and supplicate under the lamp."

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar said, I heard ʿAbdullah ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal say, "He remained in al-ʿAskar (Samarra) by the caliph for 16 days and did not taste anything except a small portion of *sawīq*.[207] Each night, he would drink water and on every third night would swallow a handful of *sawīq*. He returned home and only returned to his former self after six months. I saw that the inner corners of his eyes had receded towards the pupil."

207— *Sawiq* is a meal made of parched barley made into a kind of gruel after having been moistened with water or clarified butter. It is to be supped or sipped rather than eaten. (IN)

31. Imām Ḥāfiẓ Abu'l-Qāsim ʿAlī ibn ʿAsākir mentions in his book *Tārīkh Dimashq* (vol. 5, p. 308):

...Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb ibn Isḥāq narrated to us. He said, "I heard Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal when he was asked regarding placing one's trust upon Allah (*tawakkul*). He replied, 'Abandoning the idea of expecting people's friendship.' Someone asked, 'What's the proof of this?' He replied, 'The words of Ibrāhīm ﷺ when Jibrīl came to him when he was placed in the catapult and thrown into the fire. Jibrīl asked, 'Do you have a need?' Ibrāhīm replied, 'As to a need from you, I do not.' Jibrīl then said, 'Ask He Whose need you do have.' So Ibrāhīm replied, 'Out of the two possibilities (of staying in the fire or being given respite) the most beloved to me is what is most beloved to Him.'"

...He also said, "Everything has a source of nobility, and the nobility of the heart lies in the pleasure of Allah Most High..."

...Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā Thaʿlab said, "I came to Aḥmad and saw a man whose soul was grieving him. He did not wish for it to grow; it was like a fire had been kindled in front of him."

... Abu'l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ṣūfī narrated to us. He said, "A man from the people of knowledge, who was good and erudite and known as Abū Jaʿfar said to me the night in which we buried Abū ʿAbdullah, 'Do you know who we buried today?' I asked who? He replied, 'The sixth of the five.' I asked who? He replied, 'Abū Bakr Al-Ṣiddīq, ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān, ʿAlī ibn Abū Ṭālib, ʿUmar ibn ʿAbdul ʿAzīz and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.'" Abu'l-ʿAbbās said, "I liked what he said and he meant that each was unique in their [respective] times."

32. Imām Ḥāfiẓ Abu'l-Qāsim ʿAlī ibn ʿAsākir mentions in his book *Tārīkh Dimashq* (vol. 5, p. 310):

ʿAbdullah ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal narrated to us. He said, "Al-Fatḥ ibn Shukhruf al-Khurāsānī wrote to me a letter written in his own hand. He said, 'Abū ʿAbdullah Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal was mentioned in the presence of al-Ḥārith ibn Asad al-Muḥāsibī.' Al-Fatḥ ibn Shukhruf said, 'I said to Ḥārith, I heard ʿAbdur Razzāq say that I heard Sufyān ibn ʿUyayna say, "The scholars of this Ummah are three: Ibn ʿAbbās in his era, al-Shaʿbī in his era and al-Thawrī in his era."' Al-Fatḥ said, 'I said to Ḥārith, "Ibn Ḥanbal in his age." Ḥārith said to me, 'Aḥmad was afflicted with that difficulty that did not descend on Sufyān [al-Thawrī] or on al-Awzāʿī.'"

33. Imām Ḥāfiẓ Abu'l-Qāsim ʿAlī ibn ʿAsākir mentions in his book *Tārīkh Dimashq* (vol. 5, p. 311):

...Al-Rabīʿ said, "Al-Shāfiʿī went to Egypt and I was with him. He said to me, 'Oh Rabīʿ take this letter of mine to Abū ʿAbdullah Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and bring me a response.' Al-Rabīʿ says: 'I entered Baghdad and the letter was with me. I met Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal in the morning prayer and performed Fajr with him. As he turned away from the *miḥrāb* I handed the letter to him and said, "This is the letter of your brother al-Shāfiʿī from Egypt." Aḥmad then asked, "Have you looked inside." I replied no. He then broke the seal and read the letter. His eyes then swelled with abundant tears. I asked, "What is written inside oh Abū ʿAbdullah?" He replied, "He mentions that he saw the Prophet ﷺ in a dream who said, 'Write to Abū ʿAbdullah Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and convey *salām* to him from me.

Tell him that he shall soon be tested and called to claim that the Qur'ān is created. Do not answer them. Allah shall raise your knowledge until the Day of Judgement.'"'

Al-Rabīʿ said: "I said, 'A glad tiding.' He then took off one of his two shirts that he wore underneath and handed it to me. I took it and returned to Egypt. I had the answer to the letter and gave it to al-Shāfiʿī who said, 'Oh Rabīʿ what did he give you?' I replied: 'The shirt that he wears underneath.' Al-Shāfiʿī said, 'We shouldn't pain you by taking it from you but why don't you moisten it and give me the water so that I may join you in its *baraka*.'"

34. Imām Ḥāfiẓ Abu'l-Qāsim ʿAlī ibn ʿAsākir mentions in his book *Tārīkh Dimashq* (vol. 5, p. 315):

...Salama ibn Shabīb said, "During the rule of Muʿtaṣim we were seated one day with Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal when a man carrying a staff came, made *salām* and sat down. He then asked, 'Who among you is Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal?' We remained silent and did not say anything. Aḥmad then said, 'I am he, Aḥmad, what is your need?' He said, 'I have come to you from 400 *farsakh*[208] away, from across the sea and land. I was sleeping on Friday night when a person came and asked whether I knew Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. I said no and he said go to Baghdad and ask about him. When you see him, then tell him, 'Khiḍr conveys his *salām* and says that He who dwells in the heavens on His throne is pleased with you, and the angels are pleased with you because you have borne patience for the sake of Allah.'"

208— The *farsakh* (in Arabic) is a historical unit of distance that varied according to terrain and speed of travel. According to the *Merriam-Webster* dictionary, it is equal to four miles. (IN)

Ibn Baḥr has increased the wording in his narration that Imām Aḥmad then said to him, "*Māshā* Allah, *la quwwata illā billah*. Do you have any need apart from this?" The man replied, "I have only come to you for this." He then left him and returned.

35. Imām Ḥāfiẓ Abu'l-Qāsim ʿAlī ibn ʿAsākir mentions in his book *Tārīkh DImashq* (vol. 5, p. 320):

...Abū ʿĪsa ʿAbdur Raḥmān ibn Zādhān ibn Yazīd ibn Makhlad al-Bazzār narrated to us in Qaṭīʿa Banī Jidār (an area of Baghdad). He said, "I was in the city by the Khorasan Gate. We had prayed and were seated. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal was present. I heard him say, 'Oh Allah whoever follows his desires or his personal opinion, thinking it to be the truth, then bring him to the truth so that no one from this Ummah may go astray. Oh Allah, do not preoccupy our hearts with attaining that sustenance (*rizq*) whose responsibility You have undertaken on our behalf. In respect to your sustenance, do not make us slaves to anyone apart from You. Do not forbid us the good that is with You on account of our wickedness. Do not show us that which You have prevented us and do not deprive us from doing what You have ordered us. Honor us and do not debase us. Honor us with obedience and do not debase us with disobedience.'"

36. Imām Ḥāfiẓ Abu'l-Qāsim ʿAlī ibn ʿAsākir mentions in his book *Tārīkh Dimashq* (vol. 5, p. 324):

...Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal would say: "Glory is to You. How heedless is this creation from what is ahead of them. The one

who is fearful from among them is negligent and the one who is hopeful is weak."

...Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said: "Fear prevented me from eating food, I don't desire it. When I remember death everything becomes easy for me."

...Ṣāliḥ ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal says: "When my father was close to death I sat by him with a cloth with which to dry his lips. He would slip in and out of consciousness. He would open his eyes and make a sign with his hand three times as if he is saying 'Not yet, not yet.' I asked him, 'Oh father, what is this that you are so eager about at this time?' He replied, 'My son do you not know?' I replied no. He said, 'Iblis is standing in front of me biting his fingers saying oh Aḥmad, you have escaped me. I am telling him that I haven't until I die.'"

Ṣāliḥ also mentioned how Imām Aḥmad died, his funeral and many pious dreams about him.

37. Imām Ḥāfiẓ Abū 'l-Qāsim ʿAlī ibn ʿAsākir mentions in his book *Tārīkh Dimashq* (vol. 5, page 340):

...Ḥubaysh ibn al-Ward narrated to me. He said, "I saw the Prophet ﷺ in a dream. I said, 'Oh Prophet of Allah, what happened to Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal?' He said, 'Mūsā ﷺ shall soon come. Ask him.' When Mūsā ﷺ came, I said, 'Oh Prophet of Allah, what happened to Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal?' He replied, 'Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal was tested in both good and bad days. He was found truthful and so he was joined with the pious.'"

...Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad, the companion of Bishr, narrated to us. He said, "Bishr ibn al-Ḥārith[209] fell ill and so Āmina

209— He is Bishr al-Ḥāfi, the great Sufi *Imām*, the ascetic and exemplar ﷺ. (IN)

al-Ramaliyya, from Ramallah, visited him. She was there by him when Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal entered on him to visit him. He said, 'Who is she?' Bishr replied, 'She is Āmina al-Ramaliyya. She heard of my illness and has come from Ramallah to visit me.' He then said, 'Ask her to pray for us.' She then said, 'Oh Allah, Bishr ibn al-Ḥārith and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal seek your refuge from the fire of hell, grant them safety.' Aḥmad then said, 'I then left and in the night a piece of paper fell upon me in which it was written: In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful. We have done it and We have even more.'"

...Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Kindī said: "I saw Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal in a dream. I asked him, 'Oh Abū ʿAbdullah, what has Allah done with you?' He replied, 'Allah forgave me and said: "Oh Aḥmad were you beaten on account of me?" I replied yes, my Cherisher. He said, "This is my face. Look towards it for I have granted you permission to look towards it."'"

38. Imām Ḥāfiẓ Abu'l-Qāsim ʿAlī ibn ʿAsākir mentions in his book *Tārīkh Dimashq* (vol. 10, page 190):

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said: "I swear by Allah, surely among you is a man who (meaning Bishr ibn al-Ḥārith) for me is no less than ʿĀmir ibn Qays."

...When Abū ʿAbdullah Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal was told that Bishr ibn al-Ḥārith had passed away. He said, "He, may Allah have mercy on him, has died and there is no equal to him in this Ummah except ʿĀmir ibn Qays. ʿĀmir died leaving nothing behind him [and he has died and not left anything behind]." He then said, "If he had married, then his matter would have been complete."

...ʿAbdullah ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal narrated to us. He said, "I told my father the day that Bishr ibn al-Ḥārith passed away that Bishr had passed away. He said, May Allah have mercy on him. In his *dhikr* was light or he said tranquility. He then wore his cloak, went out and I went with him. He attended his funeral." Abū ʿAbdur Raḥmān ʿAbdullah ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal said, "Bishr died in the year 227, six days before Muʿtasim."

...Muḥammad ibn al-Muthannā said: "I asked Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal: 'What do you say regarding this man?' He said, Which man?' I said to him, 'Bishr.' He said, 'Are you asking regarding the fourth of the seven *abdāl*? Since ʿĀmir ibn ʿAbd Qays, to me he is like a man who plants a spear in the ground and then sits on the spearhead. Has he left for anyone any space to sit?'"

...ʿĀmir ibn Ghannām said, "I asked Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, 'Who should I ask?' He said, 'Bishr ibn al-Ḥārith and I have not seen him introduce an innovation.'"

39. Imām Ḥāfiẓ Abu'l-Qāsim ʿAlī ibn ʿAsākir mentions in his book *Tārīkh Dimashq* (vol. 10, p. 194):

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥanbal was asked regarding an issue of piety. He answered saying, "I seek refuge with Allah. It is not permissible for me to speak regarding piety for I eat from the crop of Baghdad. If Bishr ibn al-Ḥārith was here, then he is capable of answering you for he does not eat from the crop of Baghdad, nor the food made by the general public. He is far more capable of speaking about piety."

...Bishr used to say: "You shall not find the sweetness of worship until you place between your desires and yourself a steel barrier."

...Al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAffān narrated to us: "I heard Bishr ibn al-Ḥārith say, 'For 40 years I have desired to eat mutton but I never have had money to buy it."

...Bishr ibn al-Ḥārith said: "I have not left desires in abstinence but rather I did not give my carnal self all that it desires."

40. Imām Ḥāfiẓ Abu'l-Qāsim ʿAlī ibn ʿAsākir mentions in his book *Tārīkh Dimashq* (vol. 10, page 223):

...Aḥmad ibn Fatḥ said: "I saw Abū Naṣr Bishr ibn al-Ḥārith in my dream and he was sitting in a garden eating from a table in front of him. I asked him, 'Oh Abū Naṣr, what did Allah do with you?' He replied, 'He shed mercy on me, forgave me and permitted me paradise in its entirety and told me, "Eat from all of its fruits and drink from its rivers. Take pleasure from all that is in it in the way you used to forbid your soul what it desired in the earthly abode." I asked him, 'May He give you more oh Abū Naṣr. Where is your brother Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal?' He replied, 'He is standing at the door of paradise interceding on behalf of the Ahl al-Sunnah, for the people who say that the Qur'ān is not created.' I then asked him, 'What has Allah done with Maʿrūf al-Karkhī?' He turned his head and said, 'Oh hoh, oh hoh. Between him and us are many veils. Maʿrūf did not worship Allah in eagerness to enter paradise or in fear of the fire. He worshiped Allah only with a yearning desire for Him. So Allah has raised him to the level of Al-Rafiq al-Aʿlā[210] and raised the veils between Himself and Maʿrūf. That is the tried

210—This is alluding to a Hadith narrated from Sayidatuna ʿĀ'isha ﵂ who narrates that the Prophet ﷺ supplicated to Allah on his death bed that 'Oh Allah forgive me, have mercy on me and join me with al-Rafiq al-Aʿlā (the companionship of the loftiest companions in Paradise, meaning the Prophets). (IN)

and tested divine antidote. Whoever has a need for Allah, then let him come to his grave and supplicate. It shall be answered for him *insha' Allah*.'"

Many dreams of this type have been narrated about him. All of them bear witness to his pleasant status and many have been narrated in the biography of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.

We suffice with this amount of citations that we have quickly compiled while asking the Mawlā Most High and Turner of Hearts that He shows us the truth as it is and allows us to follow it; that He shows us falsehood as it is and allows us to avoid it; that He keeps us firm on the Book and the Sunnah; that He gathers all of our hearts on the truth on which is the saved group, the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'a; that He grants us all the *tawfīq* to obey Him and obey His Prophet ﷺ, outwardly and inwardly, and in all facets of life; that He grants us the intercession of His Beloved ﷺ, and that He resurrects us under his banner through His kindness and generosity, for indeed He is the Most Praiseworthy and Most Glorious.

I have finished writing these pages this night, with the *tawfīq* of Allah and through His kindness, on Sunday 5 Rabi' al-Awwal, 1407 years since the migration (Hijra) of the Master of the First and the Last, the Seal of the Prophets ﷺ, at the center of knowledge and spiritual guidance, and fountain of light and guidance, Dar al-'Ulum al-'Arabiyyah al-Islamiyyah,

Holcombe Hall, Bury, Britain;[211] I hope that Allah Most High makes it purely a means for attaining His happiness, drawing close to Him, achieving His pleasure, proximity and joy, and a means for righteousness and guidance, and that He benefits His slaves with it through His favor and generosity, *āmīn*.

And our last call is that all praise is for Allah,
the Cherisher of the Worlds.

May Allah Most High send salutations on the best of His creation, our Master, our Beloved, our Prophet, our Mawlā Muḥammad, the Unlettered Prophet, and on his family, Companions, wives and followers, all of them. May He bless them, and send peace on them, many, many times over.[212]

211— This *dār* was established by Shaykh Yusuf Sulaymān Motala who is one of the upright students of our Shaykh, Imām, the Knower of Allah (*ʿārif billah*), the Shaykh al-Hadith, the Most Knowledgeable (*ʿallāma*) Muḥammad Zakarīyya al-Kandhalwi al-Madanī, and from his special *khalifahs*. I came here returning from Canada after I was graced with my companions to visit Maʿhad al-Rashīd al-Islāmī, Cornwall, Canada, which the erudite Shaykh Muḥammad Mazhar ʿAlam has established, and he is also from among the *khalifahs* of our shaykh (may Allah sanctify his soul). May Allah benefit His slaves through both of these centers of knowledge, grant them His acceptance and spread their spiritual benefit wide through His generosity and kindness, *āmīn*.

212— The translation of this book was completed on the night of 10 Dhu'l-Hijjah 1438 (31 August 2017) in Preston, United Kingdom. (IN)

WHAT DID IMĀMS LIKE IBN TAYMIYYA AND IBN AL-QAYYIM al-Jawziyya ﵀ think about Ṣūfism? Did they criticize it as being something foreign to Islam; or did they accept it as an essential part of the religion? A Ṣūfī may give you one answer, and a Salafī may give you another. But there is no need to ask either one. Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn al-Qayyim, and other scholars revered by the Salafī movement left behind clear texts that present their thoughts about Ṣūfīs and Ṣūfism in their own words. The answer is clear: not only did these Salafī Imāms approve of Ṣūfism, they valued it and practiced it themselves.

Sufism and the Imams of the Salafi Movement—a translation of Shaykh ʿAbdul Ḥafīẓ al-Makkī's book, *Mawqif A'imma al-Ḥarakah al-Salafiyya min al-Taṣawwuf w'al Ṣūfiyya*—is an authentic compilation taken from the writings of several Imāms who are revered by the modern reformist movement known as Salafism. Readers will be able to see for themselves what these renowned scholars had to say about Ṣūfīs, and Inshā'Allah come to realize that Taṣawwuf is indeed an indispensable part of one's religious practice.

SHAYKH ʿABDUL ḤAFĪẒ AL- MAKKĪ ﵀ (1946-2017) was one of the foremost students and spiritual successors of Shaykh al-Ḥadīth Mawlānā Muḥammad Zakariyya Kandahlāwī ﵀ (1898-1982). In 1968, Shaykh ʿAbdul Ḥafīẓ completed the study of the six canonical books of ḥadīth and graduated first in his class from the renowned institute of Islamic learning, Maẓāhir al-ʿUlūm Sahāranpūr. Soon thereafter, he took up a teaching position at Al-Madrasa al-Ṣawlatiyya in Makkah. Having lived in the Ḥijāz the majority of his life, Shaykh ʿAbdul Ḥafīẓ was constantly involved in enlightening the Arab world about the academic efforts of the elders of Deoband and their mode of Taṣawwuf. His spiritual disciples and those who obtained permission to narrate ḥadīth from him number in the thousands. His funeral prayer was held after Fajr prayers at the Prophet's Masjid in Madinah on Thursday, the 19th of January, 2017; and he was laid to rest in Jannat al-Baqīʿ, a short distance from the final resting place of the Prophet ﷺ and in close proximity to his teacher and mentor Shaykh Zakariyya.

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